

# ISLAM & SIKHISM

BY

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FAQIR SINGH & SONS,  
CLOCK TOWER, AMRITSAR (INDIA)







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*By*

**GURMIT SINGH**  
Advocate

**1978**

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## **Preface To Second Edition**

The first Edition of this book was exhausted about eight years ago but as I was busy writing my other books, its second Edition could not be published earlier. The book was highly appreciated by the Sikh as well as the Muslims. It was extensively quoted in the 'Punjabi Darbar' programme of Radio Pakistan Lahore.

My thanks are due, first and foremost, to readers whose appreciation has encouraged the printing of this Second Edition.

I am also indebted to S.G.P.C. Amritsar for purchasing its copies in bulk for presentation to Muslim dignitaries visiting Golden Temple and other historical Sikh shrines.

Any suggestions for improvement are welcome and will duly be incorporated in next edition-

*Gurmit Singh Advocate*

SIRSA  
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## FOREWORD

I have been asked to write a foreword by Sardar Gurmit Singh, Advocate of Sirsa, to his book "*Islam & Sikhism*".

In doing so it can be safely said and there could not be two opinions that the teaching of Guru Nanak Dev were not a message restricted to one community only, but instead were a *World wide message of love and Purity* for the whole of mankind. There is a great similarity of belief between Islam and Sikhism because the foundation on which were raised the structures of both Religions is the Unity of God, and with it the main fundamentals of *Equality, Fraternity, and Liberty* as propounded by Islam. These were the teachings and preachings of Guru Nanak Dev and subsequent Gurus and specially of his illustrious successor Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the last and the tenth Guru of the Sikh Nation, who was not only a temporal and spiritual leader, but a great statesman, a renowned poet and a Fighter for the Emancipation and Freedom of Mankind.

There is a similarity of doctrine also between Islam and Sikhism which describes God as love, Light and Truth. Both preach surrender to Him, as an unseen and infinite power which creates and destroys, and ascends the plane of reason, but is highly conceivable to one who wishes to search for Him. Moreover the adoption of a mode of thought in the field of religious meditation

also admits the Slkh Gurus to the threshold of Mysticism for spiritual purification.

It has given me immense pleasure to have written a few lines as foreword to this book, as the Ruling House of Malerkotla has special attachment to the House of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji.

In 1703, when the two innocent sons of Guru Gobind Singh were being executed at the order of Wazir Khan, the Mughal Viceroy at Sirhind, my ancestor Nawab Sher Mohammad Khan lodged a strong protest against this unpardonable action of the Viceroy and tried to save the lives of the *Sahibzadas*, who were being put to death for no fault of their own, but for only being the sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji.

For their humane act, Guru Sahib was pleased to bestow his eternal blessings on the Ruling House.

At the end, I wish the author, Sardar Gurmit Singh, every success in his effort through this book to bring about a close understanding between the two communities, whose prophets, saints and gurus have through the ages past by inspiration from ONE GOD taught us to respect mankind on a basis of mutual understanding and good-will.

Sd/-(IFTIKHAR ALI KHAN)

H. H. Nawab of Malerkotla

## **C O N T E N T S**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Godhead</b> ...	<b>7</b>
<b>Scriptures</b> ...	<b>22</b>
<b>Worship</b> ...	<b>36</b>
<b>Self-surrender</b> ...	<b>55</b>
<b>Dharam Yudh</b> ...	<b>57</b>
<b>Culture</b> ...	<b>74</b>
<b>Religious Life</b> ...	<b>87</b>
<b>Sikh-Muslim Relations</b> ...	<b>121</b>





## GODHEAD

The word "religion" has been derived from the term 'lagore' which means 'to bind.' Etymologically, the word religion, therefore, means something that which keeps all united. The primary function of religion, therefore, is to protect humanity from internal dissension and strife, to keep together believers as a single family and to show them the way to a united life.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh faith says :-

The true Guru is one who uniteth all.<sup>1</sup>  
(Siri Rag)

Says Sri Guru Arjun :-

There is one father and we all are His Children.<sup>2</sup>  
(Sorath).

Prophet Mohammed Sahib says something similar :-

*"Wa ma kan annaso illa Ummatin wahidatan"*

"Not other than but one community.

All human beings whatsoever are indeed."

Further, vide Bhaihaqi-Kitabal-I-man :

'All mankind is the family of God

---

1. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਨੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇਇ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ !

2. ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਕ ।

And he is the most beloved of God  
Who does the greatest good to his family.”

But several avatars and spiritual masters, when they felt for the souls in agony seeking solace for themselves, maintained that spiritual life was embodied in them, for they preached. “I am the Saviour” or “I am the gate” or “whosoever believeth in me would be saved.”

*‘Jo Jo Bhaey pahal autaraa, aap aap tin Jaap uchara.’*

This tinge of self-assumption kept humanity away from merging in the ocean of love-Divine with singular Fatherhood of God. But Guru Nanak says,

“Oh lord, save Yourself (Your Own creation)  
As it pleaseth You.”

Says Guru Amar Dass :-

“The world is burning, Oh Lord.

Save it, Take mercy upon them and save them,  
through any gate they can be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

Says Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji :-

“The Puja and Namaz are the same.

---

1. ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿਲੈ ਆਪਨੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰ ।

A Muslim mosque and Hindu temple are both houses of God.

Know ye all humanity belongs to one caste.”<sup>1</sup>

In the Holy Quran, the Prophet says :-

“To everyone of you have we given a rule and a beaten track. And if God had pleased, He would surely have made you all one people, but He would test you by what He hath given to each. Emulate then, good deeds. To God shall ye all return.” [Quran 5 : 48-49].

Thus, we find that the Sikh Gurus as well as Prophet Mohammed recognised the capacity of all religions to elevate and inspire men to attain salvation.

If we make a comparative study of the glorious Quran with the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, we notice that the basic truths presented by each are the same. Some of the stories narrated therein appear to resemble in subject-matter allusions and even style so much as to create in the mind of the reader the impression that the scriptures of the two faiths have proceeded from one common source. This misled certain scholars like Mirza Ghulam Ahmed to assert that “Granth Sahib is simply a sort of commentary on the Quran Sharif”<sup>2</sup>

1. ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੈਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਓ ਨਮਾਜ ਓਈ ।  
ਮਾਣਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਸਭੇ ਏਕ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ ।

2. But this is not so.

The real thing is that the Sikh religion is original. Its Founders the Great Enlighteners themselves dwelt at the spiritual summit. They



One of the most popular names of God to which the Sikhs attach special significance is '*Waheguru*'.

The Quran gives the Supreme Being the Name of *Allah*.

While there have been numerous names for the gods, each denoting different attributes, there was always a special word for the Supreme Being in all semitic languages, with the basic letters of that word,

Alif (A) Lam (L) and Hay (H) and the Arabic '*llah*' which with the definite article '*Al*' became *Allah*.

As to the meaning of '*llah*', the word is derived from the term *Walah* which means astonishment or wonder.

---

were in constant communion with the Real Source of Life-the wonderful Lord and their knowledge of Him was of first-hand information, conceived personally. They themselves stood in the fountain of Truth. The Reality was at home with Them. Thus the knowledge revealed by them is original and not eclectic. Eclectic religion is one which borrows and selects opinions from other religions or systems of thought,

On finding the teachings of Sikhism analogous to any other religion, says Shri Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh Ji, 'It is not correct to infer that those precepts of [Sikhism] were borrowed from the other religions. It will be indeed more correct to maintain that the exposition of the Sikh religion is very brilliant and the most sublime. It is based on Absolute Truth. It is for this that many teachings of the Sikh religion are found to be similar to those of other religions.'



However much man may come to know about God, He remains beyond the range of human knowledge, and, therefore, human quest for Him begins and ends in wonder and humility. Therefore, Sikh Gurus adopted the vernacular equivalent of '*Allah*' i.e, Wonderful Lord as the name of God. But Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad points out in *Tarjuman-al-Quran* :

“The word *Allah*, even before the Quran, was used as a proper noun for God, and the Quran adopted it not only because it had gained currency, but also because it was more suitable than any other word.”

Sikh Gurus described God by other names familiar to Muslims such as *Karimul-Rahim*, *Amal-Karim*, *Razak-Rahim*, etc. These sonorous and dignified words were used to attract the Muslims. However, the Sikh Gurus rejected the Quranic name of God, '*Al-Muzil*' i.e. the misleader and tempter. The difference is, as according to Sikhism :

“Saith Nanak, The Lord is *ever merciful*.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest spiritual errors of man has been to conceive of God as an awesome and terrifying being rather than love. According to the Quran, God is great and merciful, but sometimes full of wrath. The last lines of the opening passage (sura) of the Quran read :-

---

1. ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਦਾ ਦਇਆਲੁ ।

“Guide us on the straight path.

The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed  
Thy Grace.

Not [of] those upon whom is Thy Wrath.”

[*Al-Fateha*]

Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, commenting on this aspect of Islamic conception of God, writes-

‘Prophet Mohammed conceived of God as if of a splendid human Formless Form, helping those who come to His refuge but taking vengeance upon those and their generations who denied Him.’

Also, there is a striking similarity in the Sikh-Islamic conception of God. According to Japji which can rightly be regarded as a key to Sikh Philosophy, the main attributes of God are :-

‘There is but one God,  
He is the Supreme Truth,  
He the Creator,  
Is without fear and  
Without hate.  
He, the omnipresent,  
Pervades the universe.  
He is not born,  
Nor does He die to be born again.’<sup>1</sup>

---

1. ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ

The word '*Ekonkaar*' which is the very first word in Japji, expresses two ideas—that of signleness and that of unity.

He is one without an equal and He is also an indivisible Unit, the only God. The Quran says :-

*“La illah il—Allah”*

i.e. 'There is no God but He.' and further

•No one like unto Him [Quran 112.4]

Sikhism says the same,

*Sahib mera eko hai, eko hai bhai eko hai.*

i.e. "My Master is One, One and the only One, O brother."

Further,

*‘Goon eho hore naei koi, naa ko haya naa ko hoi.’*

i.e. 'His greatness lies in the fact that there is no other God, nor has there ever been one, nor will there be one'.

While Sikhism names God as '*Satnam*' the Quran also calls God as

*‘Alleha-at Haq.’*

i.e. 'God is the Truth'.

Third attribute of God, according to Sikhism, is that He is the Creator-*Karta*'. He created the world out of chaos by a single utterance or word.



*‘Keetaa Pasaa Eko Kawaao  
Tiste Hoe Lakh dariaao.’*

This conception of creation is the same in Islam. The Muslims believe that God said *‘Kun’* and the world came into existence.

According to Sikh conception, God being *‘Ajoni’* is not subject to the process of birth and death.

Guru, according to the Sikh faith, is not an incarnation of Deity, but a perfect Being who remains united with the Formless One, the Creator of the whole universe. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji says.

*‘Jo mo ko pramesher uchar hai,  
te sab narak kund meh parhai.’*

i e. ‘Whoever says that I am the Lord

Shall fall into the pit of hell.’ (Dasam Granth).

According to a legend, the Guru’s reply to Sheikh Farid (II) when the Muslim saint asked Him to honour the name of Mohammed, was :-

“The first Name is God’s,

How many prophets (stand) at His gate ?

There are lakhs of Muhammeds, but only one God.

The Unseen is true and free from care (and)

Many Muhammeds stand in His Court,

So numberless they cannot be counted.

Many saints and prophets beyond counting.  
They came into existence from the soil and  
Were mixed with the soil again.”

Such sayings inflamed the anger of some Muslims who felt these lines were disrespectful to their great Prophet. But Mohammed has himself expressed similar thoughts in the Quran.

*‘Lam Yalid Wa Lam Yalad.....*

*Kullu Shayin holikun illa Wajh’*

i.e. ‘Neither begetter nor begotten is He  
All things are mortal but the face of God  
Himself, the primal moveless cause of all.”

Further, the prophet preached :-

“Say in sooth, I am only a man like you.”

(Q. 18 : 110, 41 : 5)

Further,

‘Only this has been revealed to me that  
I am to be a plain warrior.’

(Q. 38. 70)

A Muslim in his daily prayer repeats :

*‘Wa Mohammadin-ar Rasul Allah.’*

i.e. Mohammed is the prophet of God.

It emphasises the fact that Mohammed is only a messenger of God, not God Himself so that no person might make the great mistake of substituting him for God.

Further, says Mohammed :-

‘Prophets have come into the world when sent,  
whenever  
He pleases He has them seized and brought before  
Him.

Great is the Prophet indeed but what is he before  
him God ?”

The Sikhs do not believe in the apostleship of any prophet.

The next attribute of God, according to Sikhism, is that ‘He is Omnipresent and pervades the universe.’ Sikhism accepts the transcendental and immanent aspects of the Divinity. The Gurus affirmed that God is both in and above the creation. God is immanent and is present in all men and objects. He is transcendental and as such rules the universe and issues orders i.e. *Hukam*.

Says the Guru Sahib :-

‘As fragrance in the flower,  
As reflection in the mirror,  
God liveth within you,  
So search for Him within.’<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, God’s transcendence is expressed in different words. God is “*Dur*” (far away). ‘A *Baikunth Ka Wasi*’- (Lord of the Universe).

- 
1. ਪ੍ਰਗਧ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ।  
ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ।



Shri Gokul Chand Narang, in his bid to prove that Sikhism has nothing to do with Islam, asserts :

‘His (Shri Guru Nanak Dev ji’s) conception of God is entirely different from that given by Islam. God of Islam is supposed to reside in the seventh heaven, at least that is supposed to be His favourite place where Mohammed in his Meraj or ascension is said to have met Him. The idea of any locality being the favourite residence of the Deity is entirely absent from Sri Guru Nanak Devji’s teachings.’

With due to the learned scholar, his assertion is not fully justified. Eeven according to the Quran,

‘Verily, Allah encompasseth all things’

(Quran 41 : 45)<sup>1</sup>

And further

‘The heart of man is the seat of Rehman, the God of compassion’

Maulana A. Rumi in his *Mathnawi*, generally called the Quran in Persian, writes :

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1. (a) “*Allaho be kulle Shayin muhit*  
*Allaho nnr us-samavati wal ard*”

(b) “*Wasea Rabbona kulle Shayin ilma.....*  
*Hua ala kulle Shayin muhit,*  
*Hua makum yanama kuntnum.*”

“The Prophet says, says Allah, I *cannot be contained* beneath the earth or above it, neither in the heavens nor on the *Arsh*, but I dwell in the heart of the Momin (believer, devotee). He who cares to seek me out, let him seek me out there.”

Guru Nanak, says in Japji :

“Infinite is the number of the lower regions and  
Infinite the number of heavens,  
The scholars have taxed their brains to utmost  
To discover the limits of His Creation but have  
Invariably failed in their attempts.”<sup>1</sup>

According to *vars of Bhai Gurdas*, Guru Nanak practically demonstrated this fact to the Fakir of Baghdad.

But as stated earlier, both according to Islam and Sikhism, God transcends the universe, and also pervades it. Hence, there is not material contradiction in the conception of God according to Islam and Sikhism. Another important attribute of God, according to Sikh faith, is that—

“He is eternal,  
Always existing,  
Having neither beginning nor end.”

- 
1. ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸਾ ।  
ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੈ ਵੈਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ।



Says Guru Nanak,

*'Ad Such Jugaad Such,  
Hai Bhi Such,  
Nanak Hosi Bhi Such,'*

i.e. 'He was True in the beginning  
Has for all times been true ;  
True even now and shall  
Remain True for ever.'

The same idea finds expression in the Quran. Says the Prophet :-

*'He is the first, He is the last (Q57 : 3)*

Sikh Gurus were staunch advocates of the Muslim idea of *Vahadat Al Shuhua* which means that Allah has a being of His Own and that matter on creation has a separate being. They are all created by God, but are not God. This is also termed as *Hama Azust*, i.e. the phenomenal world is from Him.

Says the Guru Sahib—

“That which is visible is subject to decay.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the outer form of man is perishable, but the spirit is immortal.

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1. ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਚਲਣਹਾਰੁ ।

Says the Guru Sahib :-

‘Consider this body as subject to decay.

O good men,

Regard the all prevading soul that

Dwells it alone as eternal.’<sup>1</sup>

and further :-

‘Death does not seize the spirit.’<sup>2</sup>

(Gauri-G-5).

Islam teaches the same :-

The qualities of the body change :

But the soul abides like the bright sun,

Why worry over the thought of death

When the soul is death-less.

(*Maulana Rumi in Mathanawi*)

But these similarities in thought are no justification for claiming that one is the off-shoot of the other.<sup>3</sup>

“Even the main religious tenets of Islam were derived from Judaism and heretical gnostic Christianity

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1. ਸਾਧੋ ਇਹ ਤਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ ।  
ਯਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਾਮੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਾਚੋ ਤਾਹਿ ਪਛਾਨੋ ।

2. ਮਰਣੁ ਹਾਰੁ ਇਹ ਜੀਅਰਾ ਨਾਹੀ ।

3. In fact, Absolute Truth revealed by both is the same.

although it can't be assumed that Mohammed possessed any exact knowledge of either religion. He felt himself called upon, however, to proclaim to the Arabs, the divine revelation which the Jewish and Christian people had already received through Moses and Jesus ; and the Quran is the Arabic edition of the earlier scriptures, with which it agrees in content''

*(Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences)*



## SCRIPTURES

“Say, we believe in Allah and that revealed to us and to.....Ibrahim, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and to Jesus and to the prophets...We do not distinguish between any of them and to Him we submit.” (Q. iii—83)

The above lines enshrine the basic truth that all the great religions and their scriptures emanate from one Divine source.

All religions scriptures spring from sustained thinking and mature reflection, superb inspiration and profound realisation of saints and prophets. Transcendental truths are known to them directly through intuition. These prophets are, in fact, handiwork of the immortal God. Although it was they who actually wrote or sermonized, but it was all through God's guidance and dictation that they could do so, being moved by His spirit.

“All scripture,” writes *St. Paul*, “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work.”

(*Timothy 3 : 16—7*)



The men who wrote these scriptures were guided by the Holy Spirit, both in the thought they expressed and in the choice of words. Writes *St. Peter* :

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Prophet Mohammed had his revelations directly from God. Says he :

“It is God who has sent down clear revelations to His servant, that He may bring you forth from darkness to the Light.”

(*Quran 57 : 9*)

Further, says the prophet :

“When it (revelation) comes down, your comrade does not err, neither shall he fail, nor does he speak from desire. This is no other than an inspiration imbrued (in him) which one of mighty powers and full of strength has taught to him ; then he became perfect and is in the highest zenith, afterwards he drew near and came down and was at two bows length or closer. Then He inspired His servant with what He could inspire.”

(Q. 53 : 1—12)

The above citations from the holy Quran establish beyond any doubt that prophet Mohammed spoke only

such words as were put into his mouth by God and was not led by human reasoning or ambition.

The Sikh Guru Sahibs too received their revelations directly from God, for they had a direct vision of Truth.

“One day”, writes *Macauliffe*, “after bathing, Nanak disappeared in a forest and had a vision of God’s presence. God said to him, “I am with thee, I have made thee happy and also those who shall take thy name. Practice the repetition of My Name, charity, ablutions, worship and meditation.

He again said, ‘O Nanak ! to him, upon whom your look of kindness resteth, be thou merciful.

My name is God, the primal Brahma, and thou art the Divine Guru.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. The original quotation in the Oldest Life Story of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji is as under :-

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ, ‘ਨਾਨਕ ! ਇਹੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਕਾ ਪਿਆਲਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਪੀਉ’  
ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕੀਤੀ, ਪਿਆਲਾ ਪੀਤਾ, ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੁ ਹੋਆ,  
‘ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਹਾਂ । ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਕੀਆ ਹੈ, ਅਰੁ ਜੋ ਤੇਰਾ  
ਨਾਉ ਲੇਵੈਗਾ ਸੋ ਸਭ ਮੈਂ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੈਨਿ । ਤੂ ਜਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ,  
ਅਰੁ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਭੀ ਜਪਾਇ । ਅਰੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਥੀਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪੁ ਰਹੁ, ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨ  
ਇਸਨਾਨੁ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਸਿਮਰਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਹੁ । ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੀਆ ਹੈ  
ਤੂੰ ਏਹਾ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ’ ।

i.e. The Master! ordained, “Nanak This is nectar, It is the cup of

Sri Guru Nanak Devji himself says in the Guru Granth Sahib :-

“I have found the (Formless) Premier Omnipresent Lord to be my Enlightener”.

(Ram Kali M : I)

“Whatever word I receive from the Lord, I pass it on in the same strain, O Lalo.”

(Tilang M : I)

Commenting on this fact, *Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh*, a great exponent of Sikhism, writes :

---

the drink of My Name, you enjoy it.” To this the Enlightened Nanak bowed. He drank the cup. The Master showered His Bliss and said.

“Nanak ! I shall ever keep with you. I have exalted you to the Supreme State of Soul's existence and all who will invoke you shall too be blessed with the Super most STATELESS state for their souls' eternal existence. You now return to the world and dwell on My Name ceaselessly and make the other peoples of the world also to invoke Me by incessantly dwelling on My Name. While living in the world you keep un-attached. Be occupied with dwelling on the Name, be charitable, keep ever clean by bathing, serving others and in My Eternal Rememberance I have entrusted the Treasure of the Name to you. Now this (the eternal dwelling on the Name) be your occupation.”



“The founders, the leading Great Personalities of Sikhism, the Ten Great Enlighteners (Sri Guru Nanak Devji and his nine successors) were the Great Souls who lived at the zenith of spiritual Divinity. Their knowledge of the ‘Presence of God’ which they revealed has not been borrowed from any other religion, they had for themselves experienced spiritually the Presence of God. They had intuitively realised God at heart about which they have themselves spoken.”

(Veekay Weekly)

Similarly, after Guru Nanak Devji, his successors too had their knowledge directly from the Lord. This fact finds full support from the following references from Sri Guru Granth Sahib and their echoes in other authentic treatises on Sikhism.

Asked by Emperor Jehangir to erase certain hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, writes *Maccauliffe*, Sri Guru Arjan Devji replied :

“I can’t erase or alter an iota. I am the worshipper of the immortal God, the Supreme Soul of the world. There is no monarch save Him and what He revealed to the Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Ram Dass, and afterwards to myself, is written in the holy Granth Sahib. The hymns which find a place in it are not disrespectful to any Hindu Incarnation or any Mohammedan prophet. It is *certainly* stated that prophets, priests, and incarnations are the handiwork of immortal God, Whose limits none can find.



My object is the spreading of the truth and the destruction of falsehood ; and if in pursuance of this object, this perishable body must depart, I shall account it great and good fortune."

Further, says the Guru Sahib in Sri Guru Granth Sahib :-

"I cannot utter a word by myself. Whatsoever was ordained by Him, has been said by me."

(Suhi M. I)

Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Enlightener says :-

"Whatsoever, my Lord has spoken to me personally, the same I am speaking to the world"

(Vachiter Natak)

These quotations from the holy Quran and Sri Guru Granth Sahib clearly show that both the Quran and Sri Guru Granth Sahib, like various other religious scriptures, were written under Divine intuition. According to *Duncan Greenleese*, there are three kinds of inspirations-

- (i) *Simple inspiration or lit* : a sudden fleeting idea, instilled in the heart, later to be worked out in words.
- (ii) *Clairaudience* : words being heard as in the air, no speaker being seen.
- (iii) *Dictation* : whole sentence coming (through verbatation, the speaker being seen and heard subjectively).

A careful study of Sri Guru Granth Sahib reveals that it was this third mode of dictation which was mainly employed for the writing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

But, although, all the great religions and their scriptures hail from one Divine Source, yet, they vary in degrees of purity of transmission. The Sikh religion differs as regards the authenticity of its Scriptures from other great theological systems. Most of the other prophets have not left a line of their own composition and we only know what they taught through tradition or secondhand information or critical interpretations.

The founder of Christianity did not reduce his doctrines to writing and we are obliged to trust to the Gospels according to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. *The Gospel according to Mark*, consists largely of notes taken down by Mark from Peter (a contemporary disciple of Christ) as he used to speak to Christian audiences in the city. Being a rough, un-lettered fisherman, Peter remembered the story better than the teaching of Jesus, and his Gospel is, therefore regarded as *defective in didacticism*.

Similarly, the *Gospel according to Mathew*, is an expansion of the Gospel according to Mark. It is an attempt to introduce in it the element of teachings which was found lacking in the Gospel according to Mark. Mathew, who had compiled a book '*Quellen*' containing most of the



striking sayings of Jesus *which had clung to his memory*, supplemented the Gospel of Mark with 'Quellen', and after a little editing the Gospel according to Mathew was produced.

*Luke's Gospel* is a mixture of the Gospel according to Mark, Quellen and the local traditions of the life of Jesus collected mainly from the circle connected with the apostle Philip.

*John's Gospel* contains all *he could remember* of the teachings of Christ. In the very beginning this Gospel was treated as heretic and it failed to get even the traditional hospitality from the Churches. It is no better in authenticity than the other three discussed above.

About Mahabhartar, of which Gita is a part, Mahatma Gandhi writes. "It is the conception of one brain. But it has undergone ravages and received accretions in process of time till it has become *difficult always to say which is the original and which is apocryphal.*"

(*Gita-My Mother P. 34*)

Further, Mahatma ji writes :

"There are in it many things which are obvious interpolations. It is not a treasure-chest. It is a mine which needs to be explored, which need to be dug deep and from which diamonds have to be extracted after removing much foreign matter."

(*Gita My Mother P. 33*)

The Buddhist scriptures, the Pali canon as it stands today contains, as *E. J. Thomas* points out, "much which does not claim to be in any sense Buddha's utterance. This is recognized by the Buddhist commentators themselves, as when they explain that certain sentences or whole verses have been added by the revisers at one of the Councils.

*(The life of Buddha, P. 249-50)*

Prophet Mohammed, too did not himself reduce to writing the chapters of the Quran. They were written or compiled by his adherents and followers. However, we cannot agree with the assertion of some scholars that several Christian slaves helped the prophet in writing the Quran. Most of these slaves had become earlier converts to Islam and they suffered for it. Had the Quran not been Divinely inspired, many of them would have recanted in the early days. Furthermore, most of these slaves were illiterate and, therefore, incapable of helping in the writing of the Quran from the earlier scriptures. Such assertions are vexatious attempts to undermine the other faiths.

The fact that several Biblical stories are found in the Holy Quran can well be explained by the fact that they too were based on floating oral legends of the semitic world.

But, as against the other scriptures the compositions of the Sikh Gurus are preserved and we know at first hand what they wrote. They employed the vehicle



of verse, Macauliffe, "which is generally *unalterable* by copyists, and we even become in time familiar with their different styles. *No spurious compositions or extraneous dogmas can, therefore, be represented as theirs.*"

The sacred books we have are all copies out of the original Book of God that is kept eternally in heaven, where mortals can't enter to defile it. From the to time, God in His mercy reveals portions of this book through His messengers, as they may be needed. Therefore, when we find some identical maxims in Sikhism and Islam or in Islam and Christianity, this is because they were all inspired by a common origin and because each held that the *basic Truth is one*. Truth is timeless, it does not differ from one age to another, from one geographical location to another. Men's ideas may differ, men's customs may change, men's moral codes may vary, but the great all-prevailing Truth stands for eternity. Therefore, critics unwittingly pay the Sikh Guru Sahibs a compliment when they declare that they say many things akin to the other great religions of the world. The fact is that truth is never old.

*Such Purana na theey.*

(Var Sarang M : 3)

Again,

*Such Purana hovey Naahin*

(Var Ramkali M : 1)

But when it gets mixed up with untruth, it has to be revitalised and re-interpreted and then it is ever new.

Many words of the Muslim religious diction do occur in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, but it is so because from eleventh century onward, there was impact of semitic culture and civilization on other cultures and civilizations. Sri Guru Nanak Devji preached free discussions with the followers of other faiths Says he :

*“So long as we live, sayeth Nanak.*

*We must share our thoughts with each other.”*

(Dhanasari M : I)

Sri Guru Nanak Devji held discussions on various religious doctrines with various Sufis and the like durinn his travels to Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan etc., and had, therefore, become acquainted with bits of Moslem lore, such as some of the ‘hadith’ or sayings of Mohammed and with the verses of the Quran which were popular. The Sikh Guru Sahibs were knowledgable about the psychology of the average man who is proud of his faith and likes to stick to the routine prescribed by it. Therefore, to bring home new ideas, the Sikh Guru Sahibs illustrated them with a vocabulary at once rich and eloquent.

Prophet Mohammed said :-

*“To Kallimun annaso ala qadre uqulehum”*

i. e. Speak unto men according as may be their capacity of intelligence.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita :-

Tan akrtsna vido mandan  
 krtsna-vit na vichalayet ;  
 Na buddhi-bhedam Janayed  
 ajnanam Karma-sanginam.

i. e. Let not the man, who knoweth all, disturb the slower minds of those who know not all. Do not confuse child minds with abstract thoughts. They must continue for some more time yet to learn from pious rituals and good deeds.

Christian scriptures distinguish between milk for babes and meat for the strong.

It is clear from the above quotations that no new religion can strike roots unless it accepts the basic categories and idioms of the already prevalent religions. It must try to give enlarged meanings to make its doctrines intelligible to common man.

How the Sikh Guru Sahibs illustrated their ideas to various people in the language of common speech may be judged from the following incidents.

At Panipat, a Muhammedan, disciple of Shaikh Sharaf, Tateehari by name, addressed Sri Guru Nanak Devji who was then wearing a Persian hat and a nondescript costume which Tateehari took for that of a Persian Darwesh with the Muhammedan Salutation *Salama Alaikum*. To this



Sri Guru Nanak Devji replied '*Salam Alekh ko*' (Salutation to the Invisible).

Similarly, at Baghdad, Sri Guru Nanak Devji with a view to attracting the local population shouted the Muhammadan call to prayer, but omitted the words '*Muhammed ar Rasul Allha*' of the creed and substituted Arabic words of a similar sound to express his own ideas.

Even prophet Muhammed had borrowed the existing phraseology while composing the Holy Quran. Quran contains a large number of Biblical terms and legends. To quote *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* :-

“The word *Allah*, even before the Quran was used as proper noun for God and the Quran, adopted it because it had gained currency.”

So when we see similar things of the Sikh religion to those of any other religion, it does not mean that these principles of Sikhism have been selected or borrowed from the principles of other religions. It is an independent and sovereign faith. To quote Mecaulliffe :-

*“It is difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or a more comprehensive ethical system than Sikhism.”*

The Quran teaches that God in diverse ages of the world reveals His will in writing to several prophets and it is incumbent upon every one to believe every



word of it. No doubt Muhammed had said that He is the seal of prophets but to quote Duncean Greenleese :-

“The seal or signet of the prophets (*Khatim*) is not the last of the prophets (*Khatam*) as so often mistakenly said, for God's ways do not change, His messages are endless and future people and ages will need His messengers as have the past.”

The obvious conclusion is that “Sikhism is an independent revelation of one Truth of all sects ; it is no variant of Muslim teachings, save in that it too proclaims the love of God and the need for men to hold Him always in their heart. It too is a distinct religion like the other great religions of the world.” The voice that had spoken to many a seer again became vocal through the Sikh Gurus and is recorded in most pure and original form in the Sikh Scripture, ‘Sir Adi Granth.’

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# WORSHIP

In all the religions of the world, worship plays the most important role in the spiritual life of the people. Out of the five pillars on which ISLAM is built up, three (prayer, pilgrimage and fasting) are nothing but modes of worship.

There is so much common in the Sikh and Muslim ways of worship. Three basic underlying fundamentals of the Sikh-Islamic mode of worship are :

## 1. UNITY OF BEING :

It means that God is one and unique. The Quran does not merely say that we worship God or that God is entitled to our worship. It says ;

*“Iyyaka Naabudo wa Iyyaka Nastaeen”*

i.e. Thee (alone) do we worship, and Three (alone) do we ask for help.

It thus emphasises the *singleness* and *unity* of God, who is to be worshipped and thus bars, once for all, the worship of anyone other than one God. Sikhs too are enjoined to worship none but ‘*Ekonkar*’, the One that is Eternal.

## 2. UNITY OF WORSHIP :

The Eternal alone is entitled to worship and we must all bow before Him. It rules out the possibility of idol-worship. It also means perfect equality at worship.

## 3. UNITY OF ATTRIBUTES :

It means that all the attributes through which God manifests Himself belong to Him alone and none else shares those divine attributes. This conception differentiates Sikh-Islamic concept from the Hindu mythological conception that Maya was united with God and gave birth to three acceptable children, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who along-with other gods and goddesses work side by side with or under His control, because, according to Sikh-Islamic conception, to make any one else share any of those attributes with God is to dissect and to destroy His unity.

Beside these similar fundamental principles of worship, Islam and Sikhism, more or less, concur on even the mode of worship, as we will discuss below :-

## PRAYER

*“Tum Mat Pita ham barak tere,  
Tumri kripa mahi sukh ghanere.”*

i.e. “Our father, mother, Thou, Thy children we,  
Thy bountiest grace reigns eomforts free.”

Both Islam and Sikhism give the greatest prominence to prayer, because it is the best way to the practical realization of the well established principle of 'Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.' It represents a beautiful sense of perfect equality and brotherhood of man.

It is one of the five pillars on which Islam is built up. In a *Hadith*, the saying of prayer is compared to washing the river. Abu Huraira says that he heard the holy prophet say,

"If one of you has a river at his door in which he washes himself five times a day, what do you think? Would it leave any dirt on him."

The companions replied ;

"No, it would not leave any dirt on him."

The Prophet said,

"This is an example of five prayers with which Allah blots off the evils of a man."

Guru Nanak in Japji says the same :

"Soiled when hands, feet and other parts of the  
body are,

Their dirt is removed by rinsing them with water,

When clothes do become polluted,

Their stains are washed clean,



If soap be applied to them.  
 But when the mind is defiled,  
 By the commission of many a sin,  
 It can be cleansed,  
 By the remembrance of His name (Prayer)<sup>1</sup>

(Japji-20)

This important duty is frequently enjoined in the Quran ;  
 "Glorify God when it is evening and Morning and to  
 Him be praise in heavens and the earth and at afternoon  
 and at tide."

Sikh Gurus also preached that His name should be  
 remembered at all times, in every breath, but especially in the  
 early hours of the day. Says the Guru :

(i) Meditate on the True name of the Lord in the early  
 hours of the morning.<sup>2</sup>

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1. ਭਰੀਐ ਹਥੁ ਪੈਰੁ ਤਨੁ ਦੇਹ ॥  
 ਪਾਣੀ ਧੋਤੈ ਉਤਰਸੁ ਖੇਹ ॥  
 ਮੂਤ ਪਲੀਤੀ ਕਪੜੁ ਹੋਇ ॥  
 ਦੇ ਸਾਬੂਣੁ ਲਈਐ ਓਹੁ ਧੋਇ ॥  
 ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ॥  
 ਓਹੁ ਧੋਪੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਚੰਗਿ ॥

2. ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ..... ।

- (ii) Meditate on the Name before daybreak Remember Him day and night.<sup>1</sup>

In both religions there is a striking similarity in the mode of saying congregational prayer. The ablutions preceding prayer, the reverential attitude in standing, the bowing down, the kneeling with the forehead placed on the ground, and the reverent sitting posture, all are similar.

In Islam, however, at the time of prayer, the face must be turned towards the west, i.e. towards Mecca.

For full 13 years of his prophetic mission, the Muhammed lived and preached in Mecca. During this period, no fixed direction was prescribed to turn to daily prayer. On reaching Medina, he turned towards Jerusalem for a while, even as the Jews and the Christians did. But after a stay of 16 months there, he began to turn to the south, towards the seat of Kaaba at Mecca. A few persons raised objection to this change.

Guru Nanak at Mecca slept out of doors with his feet turned inadvertently towards the Qaaba, the house of God. The Chief priest of the place came and said, "O forgetful stranger ! Awake and see your feet are turned towards the house of God."

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1. ਝਾਲਾਘੇ ਉਠਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਸਿਬਾਸੁਰ ਆਰਾਧਿ ।

The Guru replied, "Is it so? Pray, turn my feet yourself in the *direction where the house of God is not.*"

Prophet Muhammad had himself delivered the following Quranic verses in reply to those who had objected to the change of direction.

The foolish ones will say What hath turned them from the Kaba which they used ?

Say : The East and the West are God's. He guideth whom He will, into the right path." (Q. 2 : 136)

Further,

"The East and the West are God's. Therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God : Truly God is all-pervading and all-knowing." (Quran 2 : 109)

Further,

"There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East or the West, but he is pious who believeth in God." (Quran 2 : 172)

Both Islam and Sikhism enjoin that while praying there must be an inward submission of head and heart.

According to a popular legend, once Guru Nanak joined the Nawab in prayer at the mosque. When Qazi began the service, the Guru looked towards him and laughed in his face. When the prayer was over, the



Qazi complained to the Nawab of Nanak's misconduct. The Guru said that he had laughed because the Qazi's prayer was not acceptable to God. The Qazi asked Nanak to state the reason for his conclusion. The Guru replied that immediately before prayer the Qazi had let loose a newborn filly. While he ostensibly performed divine service, he remembered there was a well in the enclosure and his mind was filled with apprehension lest the filly should fall into it. His heart was, therefore, not in his devotions. The Guru informed the Nawab also that while he was pretending to pray he was thinking of purchasing horses in Kabul. Both admitted the truth of Guru's statements, and said he was favoured of God and fell at his feet.

Prophet Mohammed says in the Quran ;

“Woe to those who pray,  
But in their prayer are careless.  
Who make a show of devotion,  
But refuse help to the needy.”

(Q. 107 : 1—7)

One distinctive feature of the two congregations, however, is that while the Sikh religious congregations are open to the womenfolk and they are allowed to join freely in all religious observances alongwith men, in Islam women are not admitted in public for prayer, they must perform the devotions at home ; or if they visit a mosque, they must do it when men are not there.



Further, unlike Sikhism, Islam prescribes certain postures during prayers. The total of these various postures with their respective prayers constitutes what is called a '*Raka*'. Each full prayer service consists of a number of such *Rakas*. At the end of every two *Rakas*, as also after the last one, instead of rising from his last kneeling, half-sitting posture, a Muslim remains sitting on his left foot and placing his hands above his knees, he says, "Praise be to God and peace be on thee, O Prophet, with the mercy of God and His blessings." Then raisings the first finger of his right hand, he recites the confession, I testify that there is no God, but God and I testify that Mohammad is the apostle of God."

To a Sikh, the only instructions are that one should stand up with folded hands to pray. Says the Guru :

"Say your prayer with folded hands."

Whereas a Muslim at the end of all the *Rakas* asks for blessings on Mohammad and his descendants, saying,

"O God ! Have mercy on Mohammad and his  
descendants,

Thou art to be praised and Thou art great,"

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1. ਦੁਇ ਕਰ ਜੋੜਿ ਕਰਉ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ।

A Sikh seeks His grace for all, to whatever faith they they belong. He recites :-

“Through Nanak may Thy Name for ever be on the  
increase ;

And may *all men* prosper by Thy grace.”<sup>1</sup>

However, there is a striking similarity in the contents of the two modes of prayer. While a devoted Sikh prays for *Sikhidan*, the Muslim ask for the path of Islam to be smoothened out for him.

They do not specifically ask for any worldly gains, because according to both Islam & Sikhism, God is All-knowing (*Al' Alim*). Says the Guru :

“He Himself knows, He Himself acts,  
He Himself sets everything right.

Before Him, says Nanak, thou doest stand and pray.”<sup>2</sup>

Prophet Muhammad says the same ;

“Even if you speak aloud, then indeed He knows the secret and the yet more hidden (thouhht) ”

(Q. 20 : 7)

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1. ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ, ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ।

2. ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰੇ ਆਪਿ ਆਪੇ ਆਣੈ ਰਾਸਿ ।

ਤਿਸੈ ਅਗੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਖਲਿਓ ਕੀਚੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ।

Thus, we find that there is considerable similarity in the religious prayers of a Muslim and a Sikh.

### PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ)

*Hajj* is one of the five pillars of Islam. No religious rite has done more to unite the Muslims than the pilgrimage, where each year thousands of pilgrims meet and act together in complete equality. With a view to creating external means of binding human hearts together, it is essential to enjoin a central meeting place for persons from all parts of the world in a religious atmosphere. Prophet Mohammad, it is stated, destroyed 360 idols in Mecca, because he perceived the ill-effects of idolatry, yet realising the need of human heart, he preserved one, viz. the temple built by *Abraham Kaba* and made it the principal place of Islamic worship, a unity centre of an ordained pilgrimage, *Hajj*.

Pilgrimage to Mecca (*Kabba*) is a religious duty of a Muslim who is able to make his way there once in his life. But although desirable, Islam does not regard it as spiritually unavoidable.

The real purpose of the various ceremonies at the time of pilgrimage is excellently illustrated by the conversation which a Muslim saint, *Junaid*, held with a person who had just returned from Mecca, as quoted by Dr. Bhagwan Dass in his scholarly book *Essential Unity of All Religions*.



“From the hour you began journeying away from home, have you been journeying away from your sins also ?”

“No.”

“Then you have made no journey. At every stage where you halted, had you advanced a stage towards God ?”

“No.”

“Then you have covered no stage. When you changed your ordinary clothing for a pilgrim’s garb, did you discard your vices and put on virtues ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not put on pilgrimage garb. When you stood near mount *A’rafat*, did you stand in contemplation of God ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not stood at *A’rafat*. When you circumambulated Ka’ba, did you behold all aspects of Immaterial Spirit ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not gone round Ka’ba. When you ran between two hills, *Safa* and *Marwa*, did you achieve purity (*safa*) and considerateness (*Murawwat*) ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not done any real running. When you



reached the place of sacrifice, did you sacrifice your worldly desires ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not made any sacrifice. When you threw pebbles, did you throw away whatever sensual ideas were in your minds ?”

“No.”

“Then you have not thrown pebbles, and have not performed pilgrimage.”

Sikh Gurus too emphasised that without cleaning the mind of the dirt of desire, and divine contemplation, the pilgrimage to holy places “does not have a value of even a mustard seed.” They declared that “place of pilgrimage is the divine contemplation and divine knowledge” and the religious merit of visiting sixty eight places of pilgrimage is not equal to the approved merit of mercy towards creatures.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the Guru declared in unequivocal terms :

I won't go on Hajj to Mecca,  
Nor do I worship at the Hindu places of pilgrimage,  
I shall serve Him and no other.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. ਅਠਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਗਲ ਪੁੰਨ ਜੀਅ ਦਇਆ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ।

(ਮਾਝ ਮ: ੫-ਬਾਰਾਮਾਹਾ)

2. ਹਜ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ ਪੂਜਾ ।

ਏਕੋ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ।

To a Sikh, therefore, every place where God's name is recited, is a place of pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak, visited the places of pilgrimage of both the Hindus and the Muslims and explained to the people the futility of various ceremonies prescribed for the pilgrims. The Hindus believe that the water of the river Ganges at *Hardwar* is sacred and by bathing in it one can wash off his sins. Guru Nanak tried to remove this wrong notion by preaching :

“Why wash the body from outside, wash the mind, clean it of the dirt of desire, and tread the path of salvation.”<sup>2</sup>

The pilgrims at this place offered water to the sun in the eastern direction with their right hand as they believed that the water so offered reaches the manes of their departed ancestors. Gurujī, with a view to explain the futility of this notion, started throwing water to the west with his left

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1. ਗੰਗ ਬਨਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਮੁੱਸਲਮਾਣਾ ਮੱਕਾ ਕਾਬਾ ।  
ਘਰ ਘਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਗਾਵੀਐ ਵੱਜਨ ਤਾਲ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗ ਰਬਾਬਾ ।  
(ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

2. ਸੂਚੇ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਜਿ ਪਿੰਡਾ ਧੋਇ ।  
ਸੂਚੇ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ।  
(ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ)

hand. When pilgrims asked him what he was doing, he told them that he was watering his fields in Kartarpur which was three hundred miles off that place. When they enquired of him as to how it was possible for water to reach his fields which were so far off, the Guru replied that this water will reach his fields in the same way as the water offered by them reached their ancestors. Thus Guruji brought home to the pilgrims the futility of superstitious formal ceremonies.

When Guru Nanak visited *Mecca*, he slept with his legs towards *Qaaba*, the House of God. When the head priest of the Mosque, *Rukin Din*, reprimanded him for this sacriligious act the Guru requested the priest to point out to him the direction in which the God of the Muslims did not reside. Thus Guruji reminded the head priest that the God of the Muslims was everywhere and to restrict Him to a particular direction i.e. *Qaaba* was not in keeping with the spirit of the Prophet's teachings that "the East and the West are God's. Therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God. Truly, God is all-pervading and all-knowing" (Q. 2 : 109)

Guru Nanak preached the same "Wherever I look I find Him present."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, although Sikh Gurus rejected the notion of the spiritual efficacy of the ceremonies connected with pilgrimage,

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1. ਜਿਹਿ ਧਿਰਿ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਿਹ ਧਿਰਿ ਮਉਜੂਦੁ (ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮ: ੧)



yet to meet the necessity of central meeting place for the members of the Sikh faith, Guru Ram Dass, laid the foundation of the city of *Amritsar*, wherein the Golden Temple, the holiest of the holy Sikh Shrines, is situated. To quote the author of *'The Golden Temple its Theo-political status :-*

“The position and status of the Golden Temple is unique in the religious or political centres of the World History.”

It is the Mecca of the Sikhs, because it is the religious centre of the Sikhs, but it is vastly more. *It is the St. Peter's at Rome*, for it is the capital of Sikh theocracy, but it is very much more, and also something less and different. Sikhism has no ordained priestly class, and, therefore, there can be no theocratic political state of the Sikhs in which the priests rule in the name of an invisible God. They have no corpus of civil law of divine origin and sanction and they, therefore, must have a state based on secular non-theocratic laws. It is more because it remains the real capital of ultimate Sikh allegiance, whatever the political set up for the time being. *It is the Varanasi or Banaras of Sikhism*, because it is the holiest of the holies of the faith; but it is not precisely that, because the Sikh doctrine does not approve of any tradition or belief which seeks to tie up theophany with geography. *It is the Jerusalem of Sikhism* because it is the historical centre of



the epiphany of Sikhism, but it is not precisely that because Sikhism, as a religion, is not history-grounded, that is, its validity is not tied up with or dependent upon any historical event. It is not precisely the political of the Sikhs because a political presupposes a state under the control of the Sikhs, and when the Sikhs do have such a State, it is not imperative that its administrative centre must be Amritsar, and even when it is, the Golden Temple and its precincts shall still retain their peculiar independent character apart from this administrative centre. When the Sikhs do not have a sovereign state of their own, the Golden Temple, with its surrounding complex, continuously retains its theopolitical status, which may be suppressed by political power, compromised by individuals or questioned by politicians, but which remains and never can be extinguished, for, *it is sui generis and inalienable*.

Sikhs all over the world aspire for a visit to this place because it is symbolic of Sikh traditions in architecture, art, religion and history. The foundation-stone of this holiest of the Sikh shrines was laid by a Muslim saint *Mian Mir*. But, unlike other places of pilgrimage, the religious ceremonials and services here have exclusively and always consisted of prayers to singing praises of, and meditation upon, God.

## FASTING

“O believers ! fasting is laid down for you as it was laid down for those before you, so that you may be on guard” (Q. : 2 : 183)

Fasting, as a discipline to purify the soul, is one of the five pillars of Islam. Islam like several other religious ascribes to it great spiritual powers that can change a man's whole life and environment. Hence, it fixed the holy month *Ramzan* for all Muslims to fast so as to harden them to bear suffering and to train them to give up luxuries and even necessities at will.

But fasting can help to curb animal passion only if it is undertaken with a view to self-restraint but it is futile if it is not accompanied by an incessant longing for it (self-restraint). Hence, Sikhism does not regard it as an act of religious merit. It enjoins the remembrance of the name of God and thereby developing love for Him and His creation ; as the only way to God realization.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, Guru Arjun said ;

Without the Lord (in mind) fasting, rules of conduct and observance of religious discipline are not worth half a penny.”

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1. ਮਨ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਅ ਦਇਆ ।

ਇਨ ਬਿਧ ਬਰਤ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਭਇਆ । (ਗਉੜੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਮ : ੫)

Further,

“I do not keep the Hindu fast, nor that observed by  
Mohammadans in *Ramzan*,  
I serve Him and Him alone who is my ultimate refuge.”  
(Bhrira M. 5)<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak also preached the same ;

“Penance, fasting, austerity, alms-giving are inferior to  
truth ; right action is superior to all.”

However, Sikhism enjoins partial fasts for ever. It is a  
sort of perpetual fast which is much more difficult than  
complete periodic fast. *Alap Ahar* (ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ), as preached  
in *Ramkali M : 1*, is a perpetual fasting of the body<sup>2</sup>

A full meal is a crime against God and man because the  
full-mealers deprive their neighbours of their portion. God's  
economy provides from day to day just enough food for all  
in just doses. Knowing that man is always indulgent to the  
body, Sikh Gurus, in order to counteract the indulgence,  
preached :-

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1, ਵਰਤ ਨ ਰਹਉ ਨ, ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ ।

ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵੀ ਜੋ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ ।

2, ਥੋੜੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰੀ ।



“East and drink less”<sup>1</sup>

By preaching that one should take less food than one thinks to be enough, they expected one to take what in fact was enough, nutritious and necessary.

Thus Sikhism does not approve of complete periodic fasts because according to it, one can't do without food and abstinence from taking food does not lead to God's realization,<sup>2</sup> but it enjoins perpetual fasting by taking meagre food which is just enough to sustain the body for the service of which it is made.

Thus we find that there is a considerable similarity in the Sikh and Muslim modes of worship.

1. ਅੰਨ ਪਾਨੀ ਥੋੜਾ ਖਾਇਆ ।

(ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

2. (a) ਅੰਨੈ ਬਿਨਾ ਨ ਹੋਏ ਸੁਕਾਲ ।

ਤਜਿਐ ਅੰਨ ਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਪਾਲ ।

(b) ਅੰਨ ਨ ਖਾਇ ਦੇਹੀ ਦੁਖ ਦੀਜੈ ।

ਬਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤ ਨਹਿ ਥੀਜੈ ।

(ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੧)



# SELF-SURRENDER

The word Islam, etymologically, has a profound and noble meaning which by itself, is the very essence of that religion. Derived from “*Salm*” i.e. peace, it means peace with God, calm resignation, submission, surrender to His will.

All religions of the world are in agreement that every act, good or bad, has an effect on the doer. This has been termed as the doctrine of Karma in Hindu Philosophy. Etymologically, it means action and reaction, cause and effect, ‘as you sow, so shall you reap.’

In the Quran, it is stated :

*Jaza-un be ma kanu ya’ malun.*

i.e. “Thou shall receive requital and reward in just return for whatsoever thou doest.”

Guru Nanak said the same :

“From the good and bad that man does he reaps the fruit thereof accordingly.” (Var Asa Mahala 1).<sup>1</sup>

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1. ਮੰਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ ।

The result of our Karma is that we continue to be reborn amidst all creatures in an indefinite series of existences until we are redeemed.

Says the Guru:

‘The body is the result of Karma.’<sup>1</sup>

Here the body has been compared to clothes. It is because, according to Sikhism, soul is deathless and after physical death it enters some other body.

Says the Guru :

“Death does not seize the spirit.”

(Gauri-Guru 5)<sup>2</sup>

Islam also believes in the immortality of soul. Writes Maulana Rumi in *Mathnawi* :

“The qualities of the body change ;  
But the soul abides like the bright sun ;  
Why worry over the thought of death,  
When the soul is deathless.”

On death, soul does not perish with the body, but takes rebirth in various forms.

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1, ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ...

2, ਮਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਜੀਅਰਾ ਨਾਹੀ ।

Writes Maulana Rumi :

“I died as a mineral and became a plant,  
I died as plant and rose to animal,  
I died as animal and I was a man.  
Why should I fear ? When I less by dying ?  
Yet once more I shall die as man ; to soar,  
With angels blest, but even from angelhood  
I must pass on; all except God doth perish.  
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,  
I shall become what no mind ever conceived.”

In the Quran itself, it is written :

“How can ye withhold faith from God ?  
Ye were dead and He gave you life ;  
Next He will cause you to die ; next  
He will restore you to life : next  
Shall ye return to Him.”

(Q : 2 : 26)

Further, it is written,

“It is He who gives ye life ;  
Then He causes you to die,  
Then He will bring you to life,  
And it is He who will give ye life once again,  
Verily man is ungrateful.”

(Q 2 : 66)

Sri Guru Nanak Devji, in Asa Mahalla, says the same :





of ways and means have been suggested by various religions for the realization of this end. But a careful study reveals that none of them is so simple, so easy, so convenient and so effective as the Sikh-Islamic doctrine of complete surrender of self to God.

Surrender ordinarily means wholly dedicating one's mind, speech and body to the Lord. When one has surrendered oneself to God :

“.....Personal desires and personal emotions no longer govern us, the action is no longer our own. Therefore, sense of personal virtue and personal sin is exceeded, the universal, the impersonal, the Divine Spirit works out through us its purpose in the world. We are ourselves by a new and divine birth, changed into being of that being, consciousness of that consciousness, power of that power, bliss of that bliss and living no longer in our own lower nature have no work to do of our own, no personal aim to pursue of our own, for the motive power above us is the will of the Master.

This way of dedication is termed “*Fi-Sabil Allah*” i.e. the way of God or for the sake of God.

Says the prophet :

“My prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God, Lord of the worlds.....” (Q 6 : 163)

In Sikhism, great importance is attached to this philosophy of dedication. A Sikh is popularly known as a ‘*Khalsa*’ i.e. one who is dedicated to God.

Says Guru Arjan Devji,

“O man, if you take refuge with God,  
You will get all the joys of life.”

(Sukhmani 17, 8)

The essence of Christianity is also the same. ‘*Christos*’ means ‘bathed in Divine Wisdom.’ Christian scriptures abound with quotations preaching surrender to the Divine Spirit.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shali not fulfil the best of flesh.”

(Galatians 5. 16)

“For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

(Romans 8. 12)

“Thy will be done, O Lord.” (Bible)

In the Gita, Lord Krishna preaches the same :

“To them who worship Me, resigning all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Lord, with their mind wholly set on Me, I become ere long Saviour out of the ocean of and death.”

When we resign completely to His Will and decide to be guided in our actions, not by our own judgement but by Him, the sum total of our past actions is no more for us and the effect of Karma is practically annihilated and thus

one escapes the process of transmigration. When we have the results of our past actions in the hands of God-centered and we rise above law of Karma and transmigration. But to reach this stage of dedication a condition of mind is to be acquired where neither pain nor pleasure will disturb soul's peace.

Says the prophet :

“Let ye distress yourselves if good things escape you and be over-joyous for what falleth to your share. God loveth not the presumptuous, the boaster.”

(Q. 57 : 23)

Thus the Quran enjoins that man must discharge his duty by rising superior to happiness and sorrow, success and defeat, and to the result of his actions. Such attitude is termed as '*Iqbal*' in the Quran and '*Sehaj*' in Sikhism.

Explaining the doctrine of '*Iqbal*' Iman Razi writes :

‘He who looks for a reward for his good deeds or desires to be saved from the result of his actions is not a person who remembers God disinterestedly. His prayer or contemplation of God is not for God alone. But he who offers his worship to God and does everything for God alone, he alone is a true devotee of God.’

Sri Guru Arjan Dev says the same :



"Having realised the will of God,  
 He is accepted by the Lord.  
 Like lotus on the water,  
 He floats on the sea of Maya,  
 Just as a swan floats on water,  
 Without wetting wings,  
 He lives and yet his self lives not."

(Vaar Manjh)

Sikh Guru Sahib? also taught the object of life is not to attain salvation or heavenly abode, but to attain everlasting bliss by God-realization. Says the Guru Sahib :

"If a man loves to see God, what cares he for salvation or paradise ?"

(Sri Guru Nanak Devji in Asa)

Sri Guru Ram Dass Says :

"Everybody hankers after salvation, paradise or Elysium, setting his hopes on it in every day of his life. But those who love to see God do not ask for salvation. The sight itself satisfies their mind completely."

Sh. Jayadayal Goyandka in his book '*Gems of Truth*' writes :

"O my Lord, so long as the desire of liberation lingers in my heart, how can I claim to be Thy servant ? Nay, I am a slave of liberation. I covet something other than Thyself, serve Thee for the sake of liberation. Thy

disinterested lover and dedicated to Thee. This is nothing short of *hypocrisy* on my part. Pray, stamp out this evil. Nay I beseech Thee to banish from my heart the selfish desire of liberation and to be pleased to bestow on me Thy undivided love. It is sheer childishness on my part to ask for anything from one who is All-mercy and un-paralleled in everything.”

A man who has attained this stage of dedication is called ‘*Salim*’ or the equable in Islam and the *brahm giani* in Sikhism.

To attain this stage a person has to submit his will to that of God and merge his individual existence into Him. The 5th Guruji says in Sri Sukhmani :-

“As water merges in water,  
So light mingies with Light.”<sup>1</sup>

And then

*Tohi mohi, mohi Tohi, anter kaisaa.*

i.e. “Thou art me and me art Thee,  
No difference exists between Thee and me.”

Now the question arises, how to attune one’s will to that of God. According to Sikh Guru Sahibs, the

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1, ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਜਲੁ ਆਇ ਖਟਾਨਾ ।  
ਤਿਉ ਜੋਤੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਨਾ ।

first thing to be done is to kill ego i.e. to die as an individual while still living amidst the temptations of the world and rise to the gracious status of benefactor of all.

According to Guru Nanak a true Muslim should possess the following qualities :

“He should bow his head (completely surrender himself) before the will of God.

Relieving himself of this ego should acknowledge the Formless Lord to be THE SOLE CREATOR.

His way of life should be that of inherent benevolence towards all souls.

Nanak sayth these are the qualities that would make him worthy of the name of a Muslim.”<sup>1</sup>

Next arises the question-how may human beings ascertain what the Divine will is ? The answer is-Universal Basic Religion. Spiritual Science tells us what that will is. Secondly, the rules of conduct made by the people who

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1. ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੈ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੈ ਆਪ  
ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥

ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ  
ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥



are 'near God' or 'sons of God', are embodiments of the Higher, Better, Nobler and Wilser, and hence will<sup>1</sup>

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1. Shriman Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh ji, in his book 'Sermon of the Basic Mantram and Five Steps', writes at page 85 :

"You endeavour to abide by His will. His Grace will thus be bestowed upon you. For knowing as to what is His will. study the Enlightening Scriptures of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and translate the sermons, contained therein, in your actual life."

"Secondly, make this a principle of your career are not to do anythings that is objected to by your innerself. Topurify your conscience study the words of the Enlighteners. They detail His Commandments. Thus discipline your mind."

"Each one of us knows that anything demanding our acceptance or rejection is either fascinating or good. Let us then go forward with that which is good. Let us be interested only in that which is ind ed good. Let us reject a thing, however fascinating, if it is not pious to do it."

"The fact that we soon get engaged in what fascinates us and omit what is righteous to do keeps us in dark and lets not the Light of His Path-will and Commandments dawn on us.

Whatever is Right to do is His ordainment.

As against it anything that fascinates us may or may not be a righteous cause.

"So before acting we must study a thing deeply. If it is found to be unrighteous, however fascinating that be, we ought to lay aside. Thus, with constant rejection of unrighteous things one's mind gets attuned to the will of God."

From the above study we come to the conclusion that all men of all faiths who surrender themselves to God are true children of Islam, in the sense in which the prophet of Islam used the word. Sri Guru Nanak Devji preached the Muslims, 'Submission to His Will' as a way to God-realization.

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# DHARAM YUDH

*Verily, valient is he who fights for Dharma<sup>1</sup>*

Sikh religion has its roots in the *Fatherhood of one God, and Love of Humanity*. It suggests resistance to unrighteousness and ever-adherence to truth. Peaceful resistance is, without doubt, a powerful instrument which can be used to produce a change of heart. But the Sikh Guru Sahibs preached use of non-violence so long as that served the purpose of bringing about a change of heart, but when that failed, they advocated the use of other methods. They suggested armed resistance as a last resort. Says Sri Guru Gobind Singhji :

“When the other remedies fail,

It is justified to unsheath the sword.”<sup>2</sup>

And under such circumstances :

“It is a pleasure to fight for a holy cause.”<sup>3</sup>

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1. ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ।
  2. ਚੂ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ ।  
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬਸਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਦਸਤ ।
  3. ਧਰਮ ਯੁਧ ਕੈ ਚਾਇ ।



But even when compelled to fight, human values are not to be ignored and the path of truth and love is not to be departed from.

Says Guru Sahib :

“O Lord, give me Thy blessing,  
That I may not be deterred from meritorious deeds,  
That I may not be afraid of the adversary when I go out  
to fight.

That I may win through faith,  
My inner conscience remaining my guide.  
I crave that I may sing Thy praises and when the last  
moment comes,  
I may fall fighting heroically in the battlefield ”<sup>1</sup>

In resisting and uprooting evil, the sword is never to be struck in hatred, nor in anger, nor in a spirit of revenge. The Sikhs maintained this ideal in battles and during

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1. ਦੇ ਸ਼ਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ।  
ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰਉ ।  
ਨ ਡਰਉ ਅਰ ਸਿਉ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰਉ ।  
ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰਉ ।  
ਅਰ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਂ ਅਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ ।  
ਯਿਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹੈ ਤਉ ਗੁਣ ਉਚਰਉ ।  
ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਨੇ ।  
ਅਤ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰਉ ।

seiges. There is, for example, the well-known story of Bhai Kanaiya during the battle of Anandpur. Kanaiya drew water for the wounded and served both the Sikhs and their enemy impartially. This was reported to the Guru Sahib. On interrogation, Kanaiya repeated Sri Guru Sahib's own instruction that *one should serve all men without discrimination*. The Guru Sahib conceded that Kanaiya was a true Sikh and thenceforward blessed him by giving ointment with which to dress the wounds of the afflicted.

The Quran calls fighting for the protection of religion and justice "*Qittal Fi Sabilillah*" or fighting in the way of God.

According to the Quran,

"God doth not forbid you to deal with kindness and fairness towards those who have not made war upon you on account of your religion or driven you forth from your homes ; for God loveth those who act with fairness."

"Only doth God forbid you to make friends with those who, on account of your religion, have warred against you, and have driven you forth from your homes ; and have aided those who drove you forth ; and whoever maketh friends of them are wrong-doers." (Q-6 : 8-9)

It is clear from these words that Islam allows fighting only in defence of one's religion. It is hard to agree with the authors of *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*

that "the relationship of the Islamic Community to all non-Islamic Communities is one of war, which may be interrupted by an armistice slovely for reasons of momentary advantage and which ends only with Islam's subjugation of the entire world."

There are numerous verses in the Quran where injunction is to do goodness to one's enemies. Indeed, even in respect of one's treatment of those with whom one may have to be at war in self-defence, the following cuation is suggested :-

"But when all is over, then take to the chase, and let not ill-will of those who would have kept you away from the sacred mosque lead you to transgress, but rather be helpful to one another according to goodness and piety, but be not helpful for evil and malice, and fear ye God."

(Q 5 : 3)

A Muslim is prohibited from driving his sword at his enemy with a feeling of vengeance or in anger.

A wonderful example is furnished from the life of Hazrat Ali, son-in-law of the prophet. In the battle he got the better of his opponent, He quartered him and sat over his chest, and with his sword drawn, he was about to strike him when the fallen foe spat at his face. Instantly Hazrat Ali threw away his sword and stepped aside, saying "Now, I shall not strike thee." The man felt bewildered and asked, "Why do you spare my life ?"



Replied Hazrat Ali, "I was fighting for the sake of God and not for my own sake. When you spat at me, I was roused to anger is '*Haram*', prohibited. To do anything under strain of hatred is sin."

Therefore, we find that both Islam and Sikhism permit of a war of righteousness, directed not against any set of people as such but against injustice, tyranny, intolerance and in defence of Dharma. Says Guruji :

"Blessed is he who cherishes struggle against evil in his heart without forgetting the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

This Sikh-Islamic attitude towards war differs materially from the Hindu view as expressed in the Bhagwata Gita, which contains the cream of Hindu thought. We find Lord Krishna preaching war not as a means but as *an end in itself*, the pride, duty and glory of the *kashatriya* caste. In answer to Arjuna's query about fighting his kinsmen, the Lord tells him to fight because that duty is enjoined on him by his caste : "There is no greater good for a warrior than a battle enjoined by duty of caste." Even if action is disagreeable, according to the Gita, it must still be done. The Gita requires no other activity beyond what is imposed by obligation of caste. From this norm of contemplation,

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1 . ਧੰਨ ਜੀਉ ਤਹਿ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ।

ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਝ ਮਹਿ ਯੁਧ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ

Lord Krishna can also approved of action which by human standards is judged evil.

“One should not absolve oneself of an obligation consequent on one’s birth... even if it involves evil.”

(Gita 18-48)

In the Bhagwad Gita, the opening complaint of Arjuna shows real concern for other persons. He was overcome with great compassion and uttered this in sadness :

“I do not long for victory.....Of what use is dominion to us ? .....It is not right to slay our kinsmen.”

(Gita 1-28)

This was a human plea, based on compassion recognising the folly of warfare. But Arjuna is told by Lord Krishna :

“It is right to fight, not only in self-defence but under orders and in accordance with one’s rank.”

(Gita 2 : 31)

Some Hindu scholars have tried to distort the Islamic view of religious war by writing that—“Muslims hate those persons who either did not believe in God, or those who did believe in God, but not through Prophet Mohammed Sahib. Thus where Muhammedans were united among themselves due to the r common belief in God, they kept

indifferent towards other people not accepting Muhammed Sahib to be their prophet.” (G. C. Narang)

The Quran preaches respect for all believers of all faiths. It enjoins war upon such persons as come in the way of performance of religious duty.

Thus we find that there is considerable kinship in Sikh and Muslim attitudes towards war.

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# CULTURE

A study of the period of the sikh Gurus reveals that it was a time of rapproachment between Hindu and Muslim cultures. The art and architecture of this period represents a happy mingling of Muslim and Hindu art, tradition and elements.

While Islam, like Sikhism, claims the entire allegiance of man, at the same time it leaves a vast field of human activity free from all shackles, so that the mind can follow its own inclinations and explore new avenues. This freedom resulted in the growth of creative tendencies of Muslim civilization and laid the foundations of scientific objectivity in the thought of the world. Furthermore, Muslim tolerance, inquisitiveness and social catholicity produced the right atmosphere for cultural contacts with the Hindus. The Muslim monarchs married Hindu maidens without any desire that their Hindu wives should forget their entire past. They tolerated traces of Hindu traditions so long as they did not come into conflict with Islam.

Dr. Tara Chand, depicting the state of affairs, writes :-

“The Muslim conquest had a tremendous effect on the evolution of Indian culture. Specifically it up-set everything. The Hindu religion received a terrible blow,

the patronage of the priests and pandits ceased, the Hindu monuments were destroyed, literature received no royal encouragement and languished ; to all outward appearances, political conquest was synonymous with cultural death. Fundamentally, it had different effect.. .....Mutual intercourse led to mutual understanding.....Thus after the first shock of conquest was over the Hindus and the Muslims prepared to find a via media whereby to live as neighbours”.

Thus there was a great cultural contact between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Sikh movement which was essentially an attempt to reconcile the flowers of the two warring faiths viz., Islam and Hinduism, could not afford to stand apart, particularly when the whole genius of the time was moving in this direction. Therefore, a critical study of the Sikh culture reveals that it is a critical attempt at the synthesis of the two afore-mentioned cultures, but at the same time it is not identified with any one of them. The Sikhs, while firmly relying on the truth of their own ideals and fully conscious of the greatness of their own culture and traditions, were not averse to the adoption of such features of Hindu and Islamic cultures as could be brought into harmony with their idealism and needs. To quote Dr. Rajindra Parshad, the late President of India :

“The Sikh Gurus were patriots and reformers, but in no way partisans. They believed in accepting truth irrespective of the source it came from.



But anything which was antagonistic to their beliefs or ideas was either severely discarded by the Sikhs or modified by them so as to bring it in line with their own beliefs. In the fields of architecture, music and painting, the changes made by the Sikh Gurus were so great as to constitute the beginning of a new epoch. It was the beginning of a new Renaissance.

### ARCHITECTURE :

The Sikh architecture represents a true synthesis of Hindu-Muslim cultures i.e. a happy mingling of Muslim and Hindu traditions and elements. In architecture, writes Teja Singh adopted the indosarcenic style, which was a mixture of the Muslim and Hindu styles,”

However, Sikh architecture is more than a mere amalgam of the Hindu and Muslim architectural traditions. It marks the beginning of a new school of architecture in India. To quote Percy Brown : “The architectural style adopted by the Sikhs while in appearance of the Moghul extraction, as the result of adaptations combined with elaborations, presents a certain character to its own, not, however, difficult to identify. Among its typical features are the multiplicity of *chhatries* or Kiosks which ornament the parapets, angles and every prominence and projection, the invariable use of the fluted dome generally covered with copper gilded with gold or brass, the frequent introduction of *oriel* or embowed



windows with shallow elliptical cornices supported on brackets and the enrichment of all arches by means of numerous foliations.”

A principal example of the Sikh architecture is the celebrated Golden Temple at Amritsar which, in the words of Percy Brown, stands as an example “.....of religious emotions materialized in marble, glass, colour and metal..... Its effect, which is very striking is enhanced by the main building rising from the centre of a large tank.....The placing of the monument in the middle of a sheet of water, not only isolates the shrine from its earthy environment, but its reflection in water adds considerably to its artistic aspect. This no doubt was object of the Sikh community when it erected its most revered temple, the *Darbar Sahib* or *Harimandir* as it is called, in the middle of the pool of Nectar.”

All the Sikh shrines have a pattern of their own very much in line with the style of the Golden Temple, with a large dome shaped like a squashed onion, surrounded by smaller ones fashioned after the Mughal style. The sky-line of the Hindu buildings, on the other hand, has a flat or low pointed roofs and the spire or *Shikhra* uncontaminated by the Muslim arches or domes.

A comparative study of the designs of places of worship of the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, will illustrate more graphically the fact that the Sikh buildings are in the

mixed style made current in the Mughal days. Structure of temples, gurdwaras and mosques not only provides the touchstone of their creeds, but also symbolizes the innermost perceptions of the followers of each. Compared with the clarity of the gurdawara and the mosque, the temple is an abode of mystery ; the courts of the former being open to light and air, with many doorways inviting publicity, but the Hindu temple encloses, a "Phantasma of massive darkness" having sombre passages leading to dim cells jealously guarded and remote. Oil lamps shed a feeble light on the image to which the faithful bring offerings of flowers and of fruit. The reason for this distinction is that unlike the gurdwaras and the mosques, the Hindu temples are not public places of assembly or of prayer but abodes of gods where priests busy themselves about their service. Pilgrims only make short visits there as they would to the court of the king.

But the mosque has no need of a central shrine, it being large enough for the devotee to turn in the direction of Mecca. But the focal point of a Gurdawara is its sacred chamber where on a platform, a copy of Shri Guru Granth Sahib, wrapped in costly clothes, is placed on ornamental stand for being read to the congregation. Similarly, in a Hindu temple too the focal point is a sacred chamber often *laid* within the labyrinth of its endless corridors.



The representation of natural forms is prohibited by both Islam and Sikhism, but the walls of Hindu temple pulsate with imagery, and its interiors are the dwelling places of gods which are covered with symbols and images. Muslims decorate the walls of their places of worship by decorative lettering. In Hindu temples this inscriptional art is rare, the Hindus conveying their meaning by incongruity and carved figure composition and thus by means of a multitude of these figured forms, the Hindus give to the temple a vivid and colourful effect. The walls of Sikh temples are decorated with floral designs, either painted in tempera or embossed in metal. The most popular of the wall paintings is the fresco, which, in the words of *S. G. Thakur Singh*, a reputed Sikh artist, "from the point of view of technique herald altogether a new era in this particular branch of painting."

Similarly, the buildings of the Sikh temples at Patna, Nander, Saragarhi memorial and the Khalsa College are all in a mixed style with some originality of their own.

## **PAINTING**

Islam prohibits the representation of living forms and, therefore, painting is regarded by some Muslims as un-Islamic. In India, Hamayun, who had studied Sino-Lersian music, poetry and painting in Persia, brought with him two famous painters Mir Sayyia Ali and Abdus Samad, who with the help of their Indian assistants, formed the



nucleus of the Moghul School of painting. But it was Akbar, who patronised it to its best. His reply to those critics who called it un-Islamic was : “It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognising God ; for if a painter, in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, comes to feel that he cannot bestow individuality on his work, he is forced to think of God, the Giver of Life, and will thus increase his knowledge.”

The Quran sees signs of the ultimate Reality in the ‘sun’, the ‘moon’, ‘the alternation of day and night,’ in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man. The Muslim’s duty were to reflect on these signs and not to pass by them ‘as if he were deaf and blind,’ for he “who does not see these signs in this life will remain blind to the realities of life to come.”

Sikh art too is based on the fundamental ideal of the Sikh faith according to which Sikhism is the art of enjoying a creative life in the world. Guru Nanak’s view of art as depicted in the Kirtan Sohila is that if we only tune our souls to the things of living beauty around us, we realize that every moment of our life, the divine spirit outside us speaks to the divine spirit within us and everything in nature and the universe urges us to grope towards truth through the avenues of beauty.

In general, therefore, we find that realism is the key-note of Mughal and Sikh paintings. Mughal and Sikh artists loved life, not its shadow.

In the designs of the fresco paintings on the walls of the Golden Temple, the Sikh artists drew their inspiration from nature. They selected floral and animal figures as their motifs. These compositions, which are perfect from an aesthetic standpoint, consist of rose flowers, branches of grapes, cotton leaves etc. In the paintings of Sarbjeet Singh the beauty of natural objects like the rugged mountain scenery of the Indo-Tibetan frontier has been wonderfully depicted.

In fact the decline of Muslim art marked the rising of the Sikh school of art. Aurangzeb defaced the paintings by getting them white-washed, because he regarded them as opposed to the sacred law. The result was that painting migrated to the Kangra Valley and the Sikh misles.

Islamic influence on Sikh paintings is also evident from some of the earlier portraits of the Sikh Gurus. In one of such portraits, Guru Amar Das is represented in a Moghul dress and Moghul turban, the current dress fashion of the time. This is also evident in the portrait of Guru Ram Das.

Sikh-Sarcenic art differs materially from the Hindu art which is, in fact, faith translated into colour. It represents not things, but feelings and it depends not on colour, but on line. It tries to create aesthetic and religious emotions rather than to reproduce reality.



Says Shankara Charya :

“Let the imaginer establish images in the temples by meditation on the deities who are the objects of his devotion.”

## MUSIC

Music is the index of a man's heart. It is the food of love and whoever is not moved by it is “fit for strata-gems, treasons and spoils.”

Sikh Gurus, composed religious hymns and enjoined the Sikhs :-

“Worship not any man or image of any prophet born on earth. Read these hymns, recite them and sing them and you will attain the enlightenment of all ages.”

Further, says the Guru

“They really sing, who love the Name  
And contemplate on true “*bani*” and word.”.<sup>1</sup>

Singing enkindles the soul and takes the devoted singer and more easily the gullible listener to borders beyond the senses to wonders, where mind, intellect, caution, self-identity become mute. Hence, Sikh worship consists chiefly in recitation and singing the hymns with musical instruments in praise of the Guru. Guru Nanak sang these hymns to the accompaniment of Rabab (rabec) played upon by Bhai Mardana, his Muslim companion during most of his travels abroad.

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1. ਗਾਵਣਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਨਾਮ ਪਿਆਰੁ ।  
ਸਾਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਬਦ ਵਿਚਾਰੁ ॥



These hymns bear a great influence of Persian and Arabic language. For example, in the following verse :

*Allah again Khudai bande.*

*Chhod khial dunia ke dhandhe*

*Hoe paikhak Faqir musafir eh darves kabul dra.*

(maeu M :)

The words 'alaha', 'khudai', 'bande', 'paikhak', 'darvesh', 'dara', are either persian words or derivatives from Persian words and the words 'khial', 'dunia', 'fakir', 'musafar', 'kabulu' are Arabic words.

Because of contact with Sufis, certain forms of verses like Siharfi and Baramah, which were current in the Persian language, were used by the Sikh Gurus and Bara-maha of Guru Nanak incorporated in Granth Saheb is a wonderful example of *Persian influence on the Sikh Gurus* not only on terminology but also on its form. For instance, in 'Tilang', 'Asa' and other frontier Ragas a combination of Hindu and Muslim influence is visible not only in the execution of music but also in the composition of the pieces set to music :

Sikh Gurus composed popular metres in order to convey their ideology. According to Sikh ideology, the goal of life is to attain a stage of equipoise (Sehaj), a stage of balance, in which one remains above joy and sorrow unaffected by pleasure and pain. Sikh Gurus omitted certain measures like Hindol, Magh etc. because

they led people to wild transports of joy and Deepak and Jog, because they made people too sad. Both these extremes were against the spirit of Sikhism which works for sehaj or steady vision of life. They, therefore, avoided the use of these Ragas, except when they could be used to modify other rages; for instance, Hindol was combined with Basant to vivify serene joyfulness, and Deepak was used to heighten the seriousness of Gauri and to make it more vigorous. The Sikh Gurus used the Ragas which were popular among Hindus and Muslims, and thus tried to bring the two communities closer to each other which was their mission.

## SCULPTURE

The practice of image worship helped Hindus to develop a style of sculpture which is alive, is possessed of a grace and intensity of expression. The most out-standing form of Hindu sculpture of which some specimens are available on the walls of mediaeval temple is the erotic sculpture. *To quote Ananda Coomaraswamy, in India* "from the first meeting of the eyes to ultimate self-oblivion have seemed spiritually significant, and there has always been a free and direct use of sexual imagery in religious symbolism."

Sculpture, under the Muslim rule in India, suffered a severe setback, because Islam forbids the representation of the human form. To quote *E.B. Hawell* :-



“Even general ban on the fine arts was not removed by the Moghul emperors, and it continued to have full effect as far as religious art was concerned.....not even Akbar, who took a most liberal and enlightened view of art, permitted the representation of a human being, or of the Deity in a mosque or building conscrated to religion.”

Sikh Gurus also issued strict injunction against image worship. Hence, like Islam, there is no Sikh school of sculpture as such. The walls of a mosque as well as a Gurdwara are decorated, not with images, but with floral designs and religious hymns written in the inscriptional art.

## DANCING

Among Hindus dancing is looked on as one of the forms of veneration of the divinity. There are devotional dances which are executed in the temple before the images of gods, by some of the worshippers, while others chorus religious hymns.

But both Islam and Sikhism disapproved of this practice of dancing at the time of worship. It is because whatsoever fineness the artist may develop in dancing, the mind and innerself of the dancer remains heedful of movements and thus handicaps him completely from emerging into unfathomed depths of self.



Guru Nanak Devji says :

“Dancing, hopping and jumping are the pleasures of mind, Guru Nanak telleth thee, that those who fear of Him i.e. who live in the way he pleaseth will find their minds filled with love of Him.”

Therefore, like sculpture, there are no Sikh or Muslim schools of dancing. This does not imply that Sikhism forbids dancing as a mode of rejoicing and recreation. Rather, the Sikhs often dance with joy, gyrating their limbs, jumping and singing vigorously to the beat of the drum. The most popular folk dance, among the Sikhs is Bhangra, which is a seasonal dance, associated with wheat harvest. The feminine counterpart of the Bhangra is the Giddha. These two dances have nothing particularly Sikh about them and the Muslims as well as Hindus participate in it.

Thus we find that the Sikh and Muslim cultures have much in common. It is only unconsciousness about these facts which is keeping the two communities apart.

# RELIGIOUS LIFE

“In comparison with the intellectual activity of the Brahmins, the ethical content of the Upanishads must be said to be negligible and valueless.....There are, here and there, moral maxims enunciated, but these are of no consequence and rise in no way above popular morality. On the contrary.....the possession of knowledge makes a man independent of all morality.”

(Keith in Religion & Phil. of the Veda P-584)

This may sound a harsh judgement but it is confirmed by scholars like Dasgupta who writes :

“No one who sought the absolute freedom of his own-self, or the extinction of his whole personality like the extinguishing of a flame and who sought the cessation of his own rebirths and sorrow as the only goal and ambition to be realized, could have much scope for any active manifestation of universal friendship. ....Tales of self-sacrifice from the motive of universal friendship are very rare, and they do not seem to fit in with the Hindu ideal of personal and individual liberation.”

(Hindu Mysticism-98)

Albert Schweitzer, in his book “Indian thought and its Development” while commenting on the Gitanic

thought asserts. "Love to God is an end in itself and it (Gita) does not make love to God find expression in love to mankind."

Hume also writes that "the practical ethics are certainly not as high (in the Upanishads)"

Hinduism lays excessive stress on the esoteric aspect of religion i.e. the uplift of soul by bringing to it freedom from mind and matter and, therefore, concerns the welfare of mankind in the other world, but ignores the outward life of this world.

Religious influences are needed for spiritual upliftment as well as social regeneration.

The religion must stress stability and equilibrium by keeping close to each other the parallel streams of external and internal life.

Sikhism and Islam, therefore, are not sheer bundles of philosophical ideas but ways of life which regulate not only religious and social aspects of an individual but also his personal life..... The prophet and the Gurus tried to uplift mankind, not by stressing speculative philosophical doctrines but by building up of character. Therefore, both took every shade of humanity within their purview.

Food and dress play a great part in moulding human character. A sound mind creates sound morality,



which projects basically from a sound body. Hence, both the Quran and the Adi Granth forbid all such food as injures the body, mind and the soul. Says the Quran :-

*“Fa Kula Mimma Yazaza-kum-Ullaho halalun, tayyaba”*  
i.e. “Eat and drink that which is good and clean.”

(Q. V-4)

Adhi Granth says the same

*“hor khana khushi khuar  
Jit khadhe tan pirie man mahin chatai vikar”*

i.e. “only that food defiles a man which impairs the body and creates complex and passions in the mind.”

According to Islam, all animals killed for food except fish and locusts must be slain by ‘*dhabh*’, for when slain by ‘*dhabh*’ they are lawful, as by means of *dhabh* the unclean blood is separated from the clean flesh. It is one of the cannons of ‘*dhabh*’ that the person who performs it should be either a Muslim or a person of the Book provided he has done it in the name of God, for the Quran enunciates :

“The victuals of the people of the Book are lawful for you.”

Sikh Gurus preached that all food is the gift of God and so allowed Sikhs to take all food except the one

which rouses passions. Guru Gobind Singh's injunction against use of Halal meat jagged in the Muslim fashion was due more to political reasons than any religious causes. Under the Muslim rule in India, it became an item of state policy, not to permit slaughter of animals for food, in any manner other than the Quranic Kosher method as describe above. Guru Gobind Singh took a serious view of this restriction and challenged the right of the ruling Muslims to impose their ways on others. He made the ancient practice of obtaining meat by instantaneous death (Jhatka) as obligatory. This commandment of the Guru fostered a spirit of independence in the Sikhs, besides eliminating unnecessary cruelty to animals.

Both Muslims and the Sikhs are meat-eater. But although it is uncertain whether the Sikh Gurus prohibited the eating of flesh, yet in practice Sikhs strictly abstain from taking beef. Unlike Hindus, veneration of cow formed no part of the teaching of the Gurus. But Guru Gobind Singh says :-

“Oh Almighty this is my earnest request  
 Save kine, killing demons  
 O Lord ful-filling my desire  
 Relieve the kine of the sufferings  
 And so do for me to remove my pain also.”

Intoxicants, besides their ill-effects on health and mind, lead the mind astray and sow seeds of enmity and hatred. Says the Quran :



“The devil only wants sow enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and gambling.” (Q : 5 : 91)

The word used in the Quran is ‘*Khamr*’ which usually understood as ‘Wine’ includes noxious drugs like opium which are also forbidden by the Quran.

Some Muslims, as al-Marghinani, have taken a liberal view as to what constitutes forbidden beverage, since it is suggested that liquors made from honey or grain may legally be considered as falling outside the prohibition on wine. But most of the Muslim scholars do not agree with him. They maintain that ‘*Khamr*’ is applicable to whatever inebriates for the tradition has it that “Whatever inebriates is *Khamr*”. Accordingly, whosoever maintains *khamr* to be lawful is an infidel (and exposed to the penalty for apostacy), for he rejects incontestable proof. According to tradition “Let him who drinks *khamr* be whipped, and if he drinks it again, let him be again in the same manner punished.”

The Adi Granth contains several hymns against the consumption of alcohol. Says the Guru :

“One man filleth and bringeth the goblet,  
another cometh and filleth the cup.  
The intellect of him who drinketh departeth  
and intoxication entereth his brain ;  
He distinguisheth not between mine and thine  
and is buffeted by his Master ;



If possible drink not at all false wine  
 by which man forgetteth God and  
 receiveth punishment at his court.  
 He who by God's favour meeth the true Guru  
 obtaineth the true wine from him ;  
 Thus shall man ever abide in the joy of Lord  
 and obtain a position in the Court."

Sikhism prohibits not only the use of wine but also bhang and other narcotics. Sikh *Rahatnamas* are full of injunctions such as following-

"He who does not even look at wine, opium, tobacco in any form, or meat of animals killed in the Mohammadan fashion is a true Sikh."<sup>1</sup>

Both the Quran and the Adi Granth disapprove of gambling.

Says the Quran,

"Avoid wine, gambling and idols." (5 : 90)

It is, therefore, disapproved to play chess, dice or any other game which involves betting, for if anything be staked it is gambling, which is expressly prohibited and if on the other hand nothing is hazarded, it is useless and vain.

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1. ਕੁਠਾ ਹੁਕਾ ਚਰਮ ਤਮਾਕੂ ।  
 ਇਨ ਕੀ ਓਰ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਦੇਖੈ ।

ਗਾਂਜਾ ਟੋਪੀ ਤਾੜੀ ਖਾਕੂ  
 ਰਤਵੰਤ ਜੋ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਿਸੇਖੈ ।  
 (ਰਹਤਨਾਮਾ ਦੇਸ ਸਿੰਘ)

Says the Guru,

“The thief, the immoral person and the gambler are crushed in a crusher.”<sup>1</sup>

(Var Malar No. 1)

Morality is the best of devices to lead mankind by the nose. The Sikh Gurus taught that mere intellectual perception of morality is not enough. It is practice alone that will save in the end.

Says the Guru :

“All else can’t equal truth, but practice excels it (the mere conception of truth).<sup>2</sup>

The Gurus hail those disciples who live the right life as their equals.

Says the Guru :

“He who lives that right life is my disciple,  
Nay, he is my master and I his slave”.<sup>3</sup>

The tenth Guru, preached to his Sikhs “Increase love with your wife daily, but never even dream of the wife of another man.”

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1. ਚੋਰ ਜਾਰ ਜੁਆਰ ਪੀੜੇ ਘਾਣੀਐ ।
  2. ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਉਪਰ ਸਚ ਆਚਾਰੁ ।
  3. ਰਹਣੀ ਰਹੇ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ ।  
ਓਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈਂ ਉਸਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ ।

The 5th Guru says in *Sukhmani*,

“Do not even look with an evil eye on the beauty of another man’s wife.”<sup>1</sup>

Bhai Gurdas, the famous Sikh scholar, writes :

“If you see beautiful women who belong to others, consider them your daughters, mothers and sisters (according to their ages).”<sup>2</sup>

Similar sentiments find expression in the Quran :

“Do not fornicate, nor live with women in secret intimacy.” (iv-25).

Some religions lay great emphasis on world worthlessness and preach abstention from life. The dark side of life is emphasised and elaborated but its bright side is totally ignored. The result is that under this influence austerascetic exercises and monastic life have become the best religion. It is maintained that salvation lies in total renunciation, is and it is mendicancy that arises in consequence.

But to deprecate God’s good provision is to find fault with his work. Hence, both Islam and Sikhism, condemned monasticism and prohibited mendicancy. Enjoyment of worldly things was ecommended.

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1. ‘ਪਰ’ ‘ਤ੍ਰਿਅ’ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਪੇਖੇ ਨੇਤ੍ਰ ।

2. ਦੇਖ ਪਰਾਈਆਂ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਧੀਆਂ ਜਾਣੈ ।



Says the Quran :

“Say, who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provision.....These are for the believers.....in this life. (vii-32).

Guru Nanak said the same :-

“Even while men laugh and play and dress and eat, salvation can be obtained.”

Hence the Sikh Gurus have preached ‘*Raj men Jog*’ i.e. “to be in the world but not to be worldly”; asceticism in the very vertex of life. “Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world” is the injunction of Guru Nanak. Therefore, the Sikh Gurus declared that “of all the religions that of the householder is the best.”

Prophet Mohammad said the same :

“Marriage is of my ways, he who goes against my ways is not from me.”

As a consequence of the above teachings of Islam and Sikhism, the status of woman was also improved because marriage could not serve its purpose unless the woman was given her due place and domestic ethics improved.

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1. ਹਸੰਦਿਆ, ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ, ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ, ਖਾਵੇਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ।

(ਚਾਗ ਗੁਜਰੀ ਵਾਰ ਮ : 5)

Therefore, Prophet Mohdmmad preached :

“They are your garments and you are their garment ; to them is due what is due from them.” (ii-187 & 228)

And further :

“Women are men’s twin halves, the most valuable thing.....is a virtuous woman ; God enjoins to treat women well, for they are their mothers, daughters and aunts, female rights are sacred, see that women are maintained in their rights.”

The Sikh Gurus have expressed similar sentiments :

“O man, why do you call her inferior ? She is the mother of all gentlemen, great rulers, great scholars and great heroes.” (Var Asa M. I)<sup>1</sup>

Both Islam and Sikhism have no clergy, no church organisation and no liturgy in the true sense of the term. The theologians are merely those who are well read in the scriptures ; they do not compose a real clerical caste. Nevertheless, they possess considerable influence, because an ordinary Sikh or Muslim, even though it is difficult for him to live in accordance with the religious law, expresses his respect for it through deference he shows to its representatives.

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1 ਸੋ ਕਿਉਂ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ।



The ultimate objective of all religions is to help human beings to attain bliss by the union of soul with God. But human reasoning is insufficient to guide man to the knowledge of Truth, so, God from time to time sends His servants, the prophets and apostles in order to guide and teach men and to show them the path to bliss<sup>1</sup>

This way is such that no matter how learned or clever one may be, one cannot discover it without the help of a guide who alone can show it to us. So long as a true spiritual teacher does not give the key, bring us in contact with the world, help us in meditation, or take us 'in', there is no spiritual awakening, no redemption and no salvation possible.

Therefore, in both Islam and Sikhism, stress is laid on the necessity of spiritual teacher. In '*Adi Granth*' this spiritual teacher is termed as '*Guru*' while in the Sufi books he is called '*Murshid* or '*Rahbar*'. In all Muslim books, emphasis is laid on the value of seeking a '*Pir*'.

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1. (i) "There was never a people (in the world) without a warner having lived among them." (Quran 35 : 24)

- (ii) "ਜਬ ਜਬ ਹੋਇ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਹਾਨੀ ।  
ਬਾਢੇ ਅਸੁਰ ਅਧਮ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੀ ।  
ਤਬ ਤਬ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਧਰ ਬਿਬਿਧ ਸਰੀਰਾ ।  
ਕਰਿ ਹੈਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਿਧ ਸਜਨ ਪੀਰਾ ।



Maulana Rumi says : “He who wants the companionship of God must first seek the company of the friends of God or men of God (Aulia).”

Sikh Gurus have also emphasised the need of a spiritual teacher to guide and show the path. Says the Guru :

“Mind is the elephant, our body the Jungle  
The Guru by his true teachings which serve  
as a goad marks out the path.”<sup>1</sup>

(Gauri, Guru I)

Without the Guru there is darkness all around, so writes Bhai Gurdas :

“In Guru’s absence there is dark and dark  
And this is why the people clash and fight.”<sup>2</sup>

To deny the existence of a man superior to oneself means to refuse to profit from the experience of others. A Guru or spiritual teacher alone can take us out of the regions of Mind and Matter and rescue us from temptation and illusion and liberate us from rebirth, because he himself, while living in human form has gained access to the spiritual realms and has become one with the

1. ਮਨੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਚਰ ਕਾਇਆ ਉਦਆਨੈ ।  
ਗੁਰ ਅੰਕਸੁ ਸਚ ਸਬਦ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ ।

2. ਬਾਝ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਾਰ ਹੈ ਖਹਿ ਖਹਿ ਮਰਦੇ ਬਹੁ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧ ਲੋਆ ।

Supreme Creator. Now arises the question how to recognise a True Master i.e. the Guru? There are many imposters, some deliberately playing on the desires of people who earnestly seek spiritual liberation. Therefore, before accepting any one as our Guru, we must test him. Says the Guru,

“First see the commodity and then trade in it.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, both the Quran and the Adi Granth lay down some characteristics of a true Guru. God usually teaches men only through one of their kind. A deity or an angel would be of little use, for his life would never be an example that we could copy. We can draw no encouragement from a perfection which we cannot share. Therefore, a true master of the teacher is a man of flesh and blood, who submits himself to the laws of nature like other human beings. He is born in the usual manner on earth, but has the nobility of expression which radiates peace and joy. Sikh Gurus as well as prophet Mohammed declared in unambiguous terms that they were not the incarnation of God nor were they objects of worship. Says Guru Gobind Singh :-

“Whoever says that I am the Lord,  
Shall fall into the pit of hell.  
Recognise me as His servant,

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1. ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਿਵਾਇ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ।

And have no doubt about that.

I am the servant of Master Supreme

Have come to this world to see the soow.<sup>1</sup>

(Vachiter Natak-32-82)

None of the Sikh Gurus ever claimed incarnation for himself.

“Poor Nanak speaks out these thoughts”<sup>2</sup> was spoken in great humility. That’s how Guru Nanak talked about himself.

Prophet Muhammed had also not claimed any special status. He proclaimed over and over again that he was but an ordinary being, like every one else, and no more than a mere messenger of God, as there had been innumerable messengers before him. Even before his death he uttered a severe warning against worship of his grave.

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1. ਜੋ ਹਮਕੋ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈਂ ।  
 ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈਂ ।  
 ਮੈ ਕੋ ਦਾਸੁ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨੈ ।  
 ਯਾ ਮੈ ਭੋਦ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨੈ ।  
 ਮੈਂ ਹੋਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ ।  
 ਦੇਖਨਿ ਆਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ ।

2. ਨਾਨਕੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਕਹੈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ।



Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor as the head of the Muslim community, echoed the same preaching when Mohammed died. He said :

“Let him who worshiped Muhammed know that Muhammed is dead ; and let him who worshipped God remember that God will never die.”

That is why both the Prophet as well as the Gurus were against performance of miracles.

Science is a statement of facts as found out now and then. It cannot explain everything. Revelation of religion brings to light the Divinity that is behind and beyond the chaos of scientific investigations. Miracles are extraordinary events which science or reason cannot explain. No doubt miracles “are the result of superior power which God bestows on his servant.” But miracles alone are not enough to prove the greatness or truth of a religion. A miracle may temporarily influence the spectators, but it cannot have a permanent lasting effect and, therefore, no new religion can strike roots simply because its founders possess the power to perform miracles. Guru Nanak says :

“If I exercise Supernatural powers  
And can create wealth at pleasure,  
Can appear and disappear at will  
And thus win popular respect,  
These delude fools only,  
Who have no God in their hearts.”

Therefore, Guru Nanak told the *Sidhs* who asked him to perform a miracle that "Except the true name, I have no miracle."

The Prophet has it

And they say, "By no means will we believe in thee till thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth."

"Or till thou have a garden of Palm-Trees and Grapes, and thou cause forth gushing rivers to gush forth in its midst."

"Or thou make the heaven to fall on us, as thou hast given out, in pieces ; or thou bring God and the angels vouch for thee."

"Or thou have a house of Gold ; or thou mount up into Heaven ; nor will we believe in thy mounting up, till thou send down to us a book which we may read."

"Say Praise be to my Lord. Am I more than a man, an apostle ?"

(Q. 17 : 92-96)

Guru Amar Dass says, "The desire to perform miracles is a worldly attachment and is an obstacle in the way of the Name residing in our hearts."

Sikh Gurus possessed the power to perform miracles but they did not encourage it, because men of God do not like to engage in such tricks.

Prophet Muhammed has repeatedly declared:

“The hidden is only with God: Wait therefore: I truly will be with you among those who wait.”

(Q. 10 : 21)

And further

“Say: I have no control over what may be helpful or hurtful to me, but as God willeth. Had I the knowledge of His secrets, I should revel in the good and evil should not touch me. But I am only a warner, and an announcer of good tidings to those who believe.”

(Q. 7 : 188)

Guru Tegh Bahadur suffered death, but refused to perform miracles. He was asked to show by miracle that he was a true Guru. According to Lateef, the Guru wrote some thing on a piece of a paper and tied it round his neck. He then declared that the sword would fall harmless on his neck because of the effect of the charm written on the paper. The executioner was called to test it and when his sword fell upon the Guru's neck, his head began to roll on the ground and all the spectators were quite amazed at the scene. The paper was read and it contained the words” *Sir dia, Sar Na Dia*”, meaning that the Guru gave his head but not his secret. About this incident, Guru Gobind Singh in his *Bachiter Natak* claims,



“He gave his head but uttered not a groar. He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his religion. He gave his head but swerved not from his determination, for God’s people would be ashamed of performing the tricks of mountebanks and cheats.”

Guru Hargobind rebuked his son Baba Atal for exhibiting supernatural powers for which he (Baba Atal) had to pay the price of his own life.

Next arises the question : Who is true Guru ? Both Islam and Sikhism have laid down the test. Says Guru Ram Dass in Rag Gauri :

“The true Guru is one whose presence provideth bless.  
Mental doubt departh and the Supreme state is  
attained.<sup>1</sup>

Prophet Mohammed has said :

“The sign of a *Rabhar* is that if one comes accross him, instantly the thought of God should come to him.”

However, there is a special characteristic of Gurudom in Sikhism. The Guru, in Sikhism, claims no essential superiority over his disciples. Those of his disciples who live the right life are hailed as his equals.

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1. ਜਿਸੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਇ ਅੰਨਦੁ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ।  
ਮਨ ਕੀ ਦੁਬਿਆ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਹਰਿ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ ਲਹੀਐ ।

Says the Guru :

“He who lives the right life is my disciple,  
Nay he is my master, and I his slave.”<sup>1</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh, pointing toward his disciples,  
declared :-

“By their kindness we are adored, else,  
Millions like me live here unknown.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the Sikhs had been raised to the level of Gurus. No religion of the word, no prophet of any religion, ever lifted his followers to this height.

Guru Gobind Singh, practically democratised the office of prophetship, a thing so far unknown to the religions of the world. He, after baptising the five *Piaras*, begged baptism for himself of them, thereby signifying that those five holy ones were superior to Guru. A poet has rightly said :

“Wonderful, wonderful Sri Guru Gobind Singh,  
Who is both Enlightener and disciple himself.”<sup>3</sup>

This characteristic of the Sikh Gurus had an important bearing on the political ideology of the Sikhs, because thus

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1. ਰਹਣੀ ਰਹੇ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ ।  
ਉਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈਂ ਉਸਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ ।
  2. ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈਂ ।  
ਨਹੀਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੋ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ॥
  3. ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ

the application of divine right theory was denied by them both to the kingship as well as the priesthood. Sikhs do not look upon the temporal ruler as the shadow of Allah (*Zi'l-i-Sobhari*) as medieval Muslim Jurists held. It helped the Sikhs to develop a democratic bias and a sense of responsibility.

Once, when Guru Gobind Singh made a sign of salutation to the tomb of a Muslim Faqir, Dadu, an act which was in violation of the principles of Sikhism,<sup>1</sup> the Sikhs at once stood up and protested against this violation by the Guru of his own teachings. The Guru gladly conceded that it had been a mistake on his part and he agreed to be judged and punished by the Sikhs. Then the Sikhs sat as judges and fined him which the Guru paid gladly, saying that he had committed the mistake purposefully with a view to testing the faithfulness and earnestness of his Sikhs.

Both, Islam and Sikhism, share a common democratic approach to settle the differences on religious and other matters affecting the community. This is termed as '*Gurmatta*' in Sikhism and '*Ijma*' in Islam. It implies

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1. Even Islam prohibits it. To Quote from the Quintessence of Islam, if 'Muslims do prastrate themselves today at the tombs of saints all over the world, it, is a sad commentary on how far we have strayed from the teachings of the Quran and what a sorry and distorted picture of Islam we present to the world',

(Page 73-Ashfaque Husain)



unanimous agreement among the leaders and scholars of the nation. Resolutions are not voted upon individually or passed by majorities, but are carried *nem: Con.* There are no deadlocks, because the decisions are not made by the dead weight of numbers, but by the considered voice of the leaders, scholars and intellectuals. Prophet Muhammed laid down democratic discussion as a duty (Q : 31 : 4). He says in the Quran :

“His rule is to discuss together.”

(Q. 42 : 32-36)

Thus we find that both the Sikh and the Muslims share not only a somewhat common political ideology but also a social organisation, a classless and democratic society in which all live honourably and sit together, pray together and work together without having any regard to caste, creed and position. Says the Guru :-

“The Allah first created light. All beings proceeded, from His omnipotence. From one light the whole creation has proceeded. Whom to call high and whom low ?”

And further

“There is but one Father, we are all His children.”

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1. ਅਵਲ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਸਬ ਬੰਦੇ  
ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਬ ਜਗ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਣ ਭਲੇ ਕਉਣ ਮੰਦੇ ।

Prophet Muhammad says the same thing :

*“We ma kan annaso illa ummatin wahidatan”*

i.e. “Not other than one community,

All human beings whatsoever are indeed.”

But although all are equal in the eyes of God, yet perfect equality among human beings is an impossibility. It is not every one who can run a business concern successfully. Infinite vigilance, fore-sight, organisational skill and attention are needed. Therefore, Sikh Gurus recognised the superiority of the intellectual. Says the Guru :-

“The man possessing the sense of discrimination and right understanding is unequalled.”

(Guru Amar Dass in Siri Rag)

But they emphasised the need to labour for bread by every healthy individual.

Guru Gobind Singh refused to accept a glass of water from a youngman the delicacy of whose hands showed that he had never done manual work. The reason for this insistence on manual work is that it sharpens the brain and serves to improve even the quality of intellectual output. The Gurus insisted that men must not earn their bread by intellectual labour alone. The needs of the body must be supplied by body. God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment, with the result that if any

one appropriates without producing for himself, he straves his neighbour.

Both Islam and Sikhism deprecated the exploitation of man by man. The Sikh Gurus argued :-

“If your clothes get stained with blood, you term them impure. How can the hearts of those who suck human blood be pure ?”<sup>1</sup>

(Var Majh-Guru I)

They, therefore, preached that every one must get his due and none should exploit or encroach upon what belongs to the other. “Render unto Ceasar that which is Ceasar’s”.

Says the Guru :-

“That which belongs to another is unlawful like the flesh of a pig to one (Muslim), and cow’s flesh to another (Hindu).”<sup>2</sup>

Prophet Muhammed expressed the same view :

“Consume not your wealth among yourselves in vain things, nor present it to Judges that ye may consume a part of other men’s wealth unjustly.” (Q. 2 : 184)

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1. ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤ  
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਿਹਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ।
  2. “ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ।”



And further, the prophet says :

“Verily, they who swallow the substance of the orphan wrongfully shall swallow down only fire into their bellies ; and shall burn in the flame.”

Islam even prohibits the charging of interest on the money lent as loan, because it imparts impetus to tendency to exploit the needy. But even with *economic inequality* it is possible to have *social equality*. Charity, which receives much importance in some faiths, has done more to widen the wedge between the rich and the poor than bridging it. It feeds ego. It is done on the basis of self-assumption and exaggerates individuality, and thus hinders mutual understanding between the two classes. A rich man fails to understand the poor because he thinks that people who want dinner can always ring the bell ; the poor also do not understand wealth. There is thus a sense of injustice on the part of the poor ; and a feeling that they are being unjustly accused, on the part of the rich.

Charity which is done to cause another to be indebted to us is done with far more malice than love. There is no blessing in such a charity which is done to show power or domination over another. The Prophet says :-

“A kind word and protection are better than alms followed by injury. O you who believe, do not make your charity worthless by hurtful coldness, like those

who only give away their wealth to be seen by men, not from belief in God and in the last day.”

(Q. 2 : 268-264)

Thus Sikhism and Islam encourage charity, not in its popular mode, but by *socialistic living* through the voluntary endeavour of the people.

The payment of alms tax (*Zakat*) is one of the five pillars of Islam. The holy Quran says :-

“You will never attain piety till you give away some of what you love, and God indeed knows what you give away.”  
(Q. 3 : 92)

The Quran further prescribes the minimum limit by saying :-

“And know that whenever you have gained any thing a fifth is for God and the messenger and the relation and the orphan and the needy and the traveller.”

Sikh Gurus too preached the sharing of one's earning with others. Says the Guru :-

“They who [eat the fruit of their labour and bestow something, Nanak, recognise the right path.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ ।  
ਨਾਠਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ।

(ਸਾਰੰਗ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ)

Having earned his living, a true Sikh must contribute one tenth (*Daswant*) of his income to religious and charitable purposes. *Daswant* is the Guru's share, and this is to be used for charity, education and religious purposes.

It is interesting to point out that the Bible too teaches tithing. A *tithe* is one tenth of one's net income. This one tenth of a Christian's income belongs to the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

But as stated earlier, the Sikh-Islamic concept of charity or philanthropy is a widely social concept. It does not mean sheer giving of alms, rather it stands for service of humanity. Says the Guru :-

“By doing service in the world  
The seat in Heaven is attained.”

(Guru Nanak in Sri Rag).<sup>2</sup>

According to Sikh Gurus, God resides in his creation and the best way to serve Him is to serve humanity. True

1. Mormans, a sub-sect of christianity are very regular in payment of tithe, even today. Their Latter Day Saints Church' in America is the richest church, which runs its own industrial and commercial establishments and banks. They are strictly vegetarian and abstain from smoking and drinking.

2. ਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ।  
ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ।



service is service rendered in the spirit of devout worship. Service for the sake of gaining material advantages or of acquiring fame or even salvation, is not service of the highest order. Says the Guru :-

“True service is done by those contented men who dwell upon none but the True one. They put not their feet in sin and practise true religion through righteous deeds. They break all worldly bonds and set and drink moderately. God's unbounded grace is upon them and He blesses them with more and more. By the praises of the Great one they have attained Him.”<sup>1</sup>

While rendering service one should work like a slave bought for ready money.<sup>2</sup> Such is the service which the Guru loves.<sup>3</sup>

The Quran too stresses the need of service to humanity.

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1. ਸੇਵ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖਈ ਜਿਨੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ  
ਓਨੀ ਮੰਦੈ ਪੈਰੁ ਨ ਰਖਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਧਰਮ ਕਮਾਇਆ ।  
ਓਨੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੋੜੇ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਅੰਨੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਥੋੜਾ ਖਾਇਆ ।  
ਤੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਸ਼ੀ ਅਗਲਾ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਚੜਹਿ ਸਵਾਇਆ ।  
ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵਡਾ ਪਾਇਆ ।
  2. ਗੋਲਾ ਮੁਲ ਖਰੀਦ ਕਾਰੇ ਜੋਵਣਾ ।
  3. ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਟਹਿਲ ਕਮਾਵਣੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਪਿਆਰੀ ।

Says the prophet :-

“God truly loves those who do good to others-”

(Q. 6 : 152)

He enjoins :-

“Be good to parents, and to the kindered, and to orphans, and to the poor, and to a neighbour with kinsman or new comer and to fellow traveller, and to the way-farer, and to the slaves whom your right hands hold”.

(Q. 4 : 40)

This sentiment in fact finds expression in the teachings of almost every faith. Jesus said to those who followed him : “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love for each other.” In another part of the Bible we find the same thing stated by John. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love.”

In the Gita too, it is stated that just as God has created this universe not for Himself, but for the souls to attain perfect bliss through it, a person who desires salvation should become the cynosure of all eyes in the matter of help to others.

Although the ideal of service is stressed in almost every faith, it has special importance to the Sikhs. To

quote I. B. Banerjee, the learned author of '*Evolution of the Khalsa*': 'In spite of the fact that the ideal of service and the inculcation of a spirit of brotherhood were equally significant features of almost all the schools of religious revival in contemporary India, it was in Sikhism alone that a sense of corporate unity gradually evolved.'

By combining charity with service, the Sikh Gurus were successful in destroying the feeling of the ownership of bread. An economic agency, *Langer* (free kitchen), was started to achieve this objective. It is a living example of the ideal "*each shall give according to his capacity, each shall take according to his need*". One may pay for the expenses, bring provisions or personally contribute the labour of love by cleaning utensils, fetching water or fuel or taking a hand in cooking and distributing food. It is obligatory on every visitor to the Gurdwara to take his meals at the *Langer* by sitting in a row with others like members of a joint family without differentiating for status. Says the Guru :-

"Let all share together equally, no one should be viewed as an outsider".<sup>1</sup>

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1. ਸਭੇ ਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਓ ।

(ਮਾਝ ਮ : 5)



For the successful working of this democratic, political and economic system, the first and therefore most prerequisite is honesty in mutual dealings.

Writes Pope :-

“An honest man is the noblest work of God.”

Honesty is the foundation of virtue. A man may be gifted with any number of admirable qualities, but if the quality of honesty is lacking in him, all other qualities lose their lustre. A poet has rightly said :-

“An honest man, though e’er so poor,  
Is a king of men for all that.”

An honest man has a clear conscience which is an important factor in determining happiness. Therefore, both Sikhism and Islam, have stressed the importance of honest living.

Once in sultry weather as Guru Gobind Singh was perspiring, his servants removed his bed from the ground floor to the top of his house. From there he heard an altercation between two Sikhs over a debt of seven rupees. Mala Singh had lent this sum to Lahaura Singh, but the latter would not return it. In spite of the suggestion of Mala Singh’s wife Lahaura Singh persisted in denial and composed this couplet :-

“O Sikh, eat the wealth of a Sikh without anxiety,  
Thou hast come to annoy me at which I am very  
angry.”

Adding

“A Sikh shall receive whatever is written in his destiny.”

Mala Singh replied : Thou embezzlest my money, and then lecturest me, thou forgettest what hath been said :-

“They whose acts are deceitful shall be punished in God’s court : Death shall smite them ; they shall greatly weep and regret when they enter hell.”

Lahaura Singh capped this with another :-

“No one shall ask for an account as long as God pardoneth.

(Guru Arjan Maru Ki War II)

Guruji, overhearing this change of verses cried out, “They who live and spend money by deceiving others shall be bound in God’s court. Ponder on all your acts so as to preserve your honesty.”<sup>1</sup> Guruji then recited the following lines by Guru Nanak :-

“What belongs to another is like a beef for a Hindu and pork for a Mohammedan. The Guru will acknowledge those (as his disciples) who do not subsist on ill-gotten wealth. (Remember) that by mere talk one cannot reach heaven ; it is the practice of truth that saves. By spices (plausible talk) you cannot turn the

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1. M.A. Macauliffe - The Sikh Religion Vol. 5 P. 116

unlawful into the lawful. Sayth Nanak, by false talk you will be left with falsehood alone.”

(War Majh).<sup>1</sup>

After hearing the Guru, Lahaura Singh began to speak civilly to Mala Singh and promised to give him his money on the morrow. Lahaura Singh kept his promise and then went to the Guru to solicit his pardon. The Guru then for the first time recited his ‘Muktnama’, or means of salvation, the first line of which reads :

“O Sikhs, borrow not, but if you are compelled to borrow, faithfully restore the debt.”

In the Quran, the same ideas have been expressed :-

“Do not consume each other’s wealth unjustly, nor offer it to judges as a bribe so that you may seize other’s property dishonestly”.

Both the Quran and the Adi Granth are full of numerous moral instructions to guide human beings in their day-to-day life.

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1. ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੂਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ।  
ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ।  
ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ।  
ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਏ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ।  
ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੋ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ।



It is impossible for any individual to carry out the divine will, to perform his duty and achieve happiness, if the society which he lives in is not systematically organised for peace and prosperity.

Therefore, both Islam and Sikhism lay down for their followers some simple rules of social relationship that are essential to keep them united. A word of contempt by one for another may create misunderstanding, bad blood and ultimately prove destructive to friendship.

Therefore, both the Quran and the Adi Granth strongly condemn the slanderer.

Says the prophet :

“O believers, do not let men laugh at others who may perhaps be better than themselves, nor women at women who may perhaps be better than themselves. And do not find fault with each other, nor call one another by nick-names.”

(Q : 49 : 11-12)

And further, the prophet warns :

“Truly for those who like slander to be spread among the believers, there will be painful punishment in the world and hereafter.”

(Q. 24 : 19)

Further declares the prophet :

“Woe to every slanderous backbiter.”

(Q : 104 : 1)

Sikh Gurus also declared that a slanderer is condemned by the whole world. He is not believed by anybody. Not only he but even his accomplices also suffer alongwith him.

Therefore, the prophet advised his followers :

“So when you hear light talk, turn away from it and say : To us our deed, and to you your deeds. Peace be with you ! We do not seek fools”. (Q : 28 : 55)

Both Islam and Sikhism enjoin association with the believers. God's true lovers find friends among others like themselves and in their company gain added strength. The character of an individual grows only in society.

The Quran says :

“Your friend is only God and His messenger and those who believe” (5 : 55)

Further, the Quran enjoins :

“O believers, do not choose your fathers and your brothers as friends if they prefer unbelief to faith, for such as take them are the wrongdoers.”

Sikh Gurus too emphasised the society of the good, but counselled the Sikhs “not to associate with those who smoke or kill their daughters”

Let the Sikhs live the life of *gursikhs* and the Muslims the life of true Muslims. Let them realize their common heritage.

# SIKH-MUSLIM RELATIONS

It is a strange coincidence that the period of the ten Sikh Gurus (1469-1707) quite synchronised with the period of the Mughal Emperors (1526-1708). Sikh movement was an attempt to break down the barriers of institutional religion and bring together the two warring communities viz ; Muslims and Hindus, to a common platform. A study of the Sikh-Muslim relations reveals the streak cordial relations among individual Muslims and Sikhs although sometimes the unfriendly attitude of the Muslim rulers and political leaders temporarily alienated the sympathies of the Sikhs.

Sri Guru Nanak Devji, the founder of the Sikh faith was admired by both the Muslims and the Hindus. A poet has rightly said :

*“Nanak Shah Faqir  
Hindu Ka Guru, Muslim Ka Pir”*

The Muslims regarded Sri Guru Nanak Devji as their Nbi. An Iranian Muslim saint at Amritsar told Pandit Lekh Ram Arya :-

“Guru Nanak has a holy book (*Kitab*), a following (*Ummat*), miracles (*Mojza*) and comrades (*Ashab*)



His qualities are higher than those of prophets. They are appreciated by Muslims. He is, therefore, undoubtedly a Nabi.”

The earthly life of Sri Guru Nanak Devji begins with his contact with a Muslim lady. She was Daultan, the midwife who was the first to receive the apostle of peace and harmony when he appeared as a baby in Talwandi, now in Pakistan.

According to Ghulam Hussain, author of *Sair-ul-Muta Khirin*, he (Sri Guru Nanak ji) received his elementary education from one Muhammed Hussain, a neighbour of his father, an issueless person who loved child Nanak ji. The Guru Sahib one day asked the real meaning of Arabic alphabet but thocked at his gross ignorance the Guru Sahib explained to him the same in simple and lucid terms, much easier than two plus two makes four :-

*Alif : — “Allah Nun Yad Kar  
ghaflat manon visar  
Seas je Palte Naam bin  
dhrig jiwan Sansar”*

i.e. By the first letter of the Alphabet Alif, we mean that we should ever remember the Almighty failing which this life is useless.

Sri Guru Nanak Devji was employed as Minister of Supplies<sup>1</sup> with Nawab Dawlat Khan of Sultanpur who took great interest in the personal life of Sri Guru Sahib and was never tired of showering open and public praises on him for his honesty and integrity. Once when the Nawab and his Qazi were at Namaz, their minds strayed; while the one thought of buying pedigree horses in Kabul, the other was distracted by the idea that his newly born calf might have fallen into a pit. The Guru Sahib divined their thoughts and interpreted their minds, elaborating that they were not displaying single-mindedness at prayer. This revelation shocked their sensibilities and they both became Guru Sahib's followers.

According to some historians, Murad of Baghdad met Sri Guru Sahib in the Punjab. It is a fact that Murad, belonging to a royal family, was blessed by Sri Guruji when he visited Baghdad. We also find support for this assertion from an inscription on a stone in Baghdad.<sup>2</sup>

1. ਨਾਨਕ ਭਲਾ ਵਜੀਰ ਥਾ

(ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਾਖੀ)

2. ਗੁਰੂ ਮੁਰਾਦ ਏਲਦੀ ਹਜਰਤ  
 ਰਬੁਲਮਜੀਦ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ  
 ਫਕੀਰ ਅਵਲਾ ਨਾਕਿ ਇਮਾਰਤ  
 ਜਦੀਦ ਬਦੀਦ ਇਮਦਾਦ  
 ਆਇਦ ਦਬ ਕਲਦੀ ਕਿ  
 ਤਾਰੀਖੰਦਹ ਯਾ ਪਦੀ ਸਵਾਬ  
 ਜੁਰਾਇੰਦਾਅਨੀ ਮੁਰੀਦ  
 ਸਈਦ 927 ਸਨ ॥

Murad was thus shown the light of faith. He could not but be impressed by this new enlightenment. The impact of the Guru's personality on his mind was complete. Thereafter he would sit at the foot of the platform where Guru had blessed him, hoping to be blessed again.

Babar, the contemporary Mughal emperor of Sri Guru Sahib, was deeply moved by his saintly character and requested him to accept a gift. Guru Sahib's reply to him was :

“Hear, O Babar, one must be a foolish faqir, if one asked thee who himself craveth for world, for a gift.”<sup>1</sup>

Babar was impressed more with desire-free nature of Sri Guru Sahib and requested him to bless by his serenity so that prosperity and honour might develop to him. To this Guru Sahib urged Babar to first set free all prisoners and restore booty to rightful owners. Babar did as he was bid.

Babar continued to have friendly relations with the Guru Sahib, who in return blessed him that his seven generations will rule over India.<sup>2</sup>

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1. ਕਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਣ ਬਾਬਰ ਮੀਰ ॥  
ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਮਾਂਗੇ ਸੋ ਅਹਿਮਕ ਫਕੀਰ ॥

2. *Janam Sakhi-Bhai Bala-Page 402*



A quotation in Dasamgranth Says :

Those of Baba (Nanak)  
and those of Babar  
God Himself makes them both  
Know the former thus :  
as the king of Religion :  
Guess the later thus :  
as the worldly king.<sup>1</sup>

(*Guru Gobind Singh-Bachiter Natak xiii 9-10*)

Thus we find that Babar had very pleasant relations with Sri Guru Nanak Devji.

Nawab Faiz Talab Khan of Junagarh was so imposed by Sri Guru Nanak Devji's teachings that he became his disciple, took with him the Guru Sahib's *kharhaon* (wooden slippers) and built a *Dharmshala* in Sri Guruji's memory near his fort.

(*Twarikh Guru Kha!sa P 293*)

Among other important disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Devji were Pir Jalal, Mian Mitha, Pir Abdul Rehman, Ubare Khan, Shah Sharph, Baba Budhan Shah, Wali Kandharl, Bhai Mardana etc., etc.

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1. ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਦੈਊ ॥  
ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਸੋਊ ॥  
ਦੀਨ ਸਾਹਿ ਇਨ ਕੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੋ ॥  
ਦੁਨੀ ਪਤਿ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਅਨੁਮਾਨੋ ॥

Sheikh Farid benefitted spiritually by keeping company with Sri Guru Sahib for 10 years.

The very first words uttered by Guru Sahib, after his emergence from the stream of Vey-heen where he was confined for 3 days, were that there was no Hindu and there was no Muslim. Elaborating this, the Guru Sahib told the Muslim Nawab :-

“It is difficult indeed to be a true Muslim. If a man possesseth the following qualities then alone he is a true Muslim :-

First let the religion of the prophet be sweet to him (i.e. he should love and live the teachings of the prophet

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1. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ  
ਜਾਂ ਹੋਇ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥  
ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ  
ਮਸਕਲਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ ॥  
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨੁ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ  
ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ॥  
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੈ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ  
ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥  
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ  
ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥

with sincere faith). Then with the scrapper (of humility) let him scraib himself clear of the possession of pride.

And then with faith in the founder of religion  
Let him break the doubt about life and death,  
Accept God's will

And believing the creator as supreme, let him lose his  
"Self" unto Him.

And lastly, if he is compassionate to all beings,  
He will be worthy of being called a true Muslim."

(Sri Guru Nanak Devji in *Var Manjh*)

Thus Sri Guru Nanak Devji preached the Muslims to be true Muslims and he illustrated his view point to them by revealing to them true mening of their own rituals such as five time *Namazes* and *Ramzaan* fastings. When the Guru Sahib visited Mecca, he kept a book under his arm. Whether this book was a eopy of the holy Quran or his own Gurbani requires further research.

Guru Nanak Devji's popularity among both the Musiims and the Hindus is evident from the following popular legend. At the time of his mergence [into Eternity, his disciples quarrelled [among themselves as to whether the last rites should be performed according to Hindu or Muslim practice.

"We will burn him", said the Hindus.

"We will bury h-m", said the Muslims.



To settle the dispute someone suggested that the sheet (*chadar*) covering the holy remains of Sri Guru Sahib be first removed. All agreed to this but when the sheet was removed, the body halth already vanished (merged into the elements by some spiritual transmutation). Disciples of both religions divided the sheet on half and half basis. The Hindus cremated it according to their rites and the Muslims buried it. Musiims erected a tomb in his honour on the margin of the Ravi (river).

Muslims erected several shrines to his memory. Their architectural style clearly shows the Islamic influence. At 'Chola Saheb', verses from the holy Quran are written on its walls in inscriptional art.

Even Mirza Sahib Kadiani, rhe author of *Sat Bachan* writes :<sup>1</sup>

“Guru Nanak a was treasure-house of divine knowledge and the knower of all mysteries.” ( *Sat Bachan* Page 23)

Thus we find that the Sikh-Muslim relations during the time of Sri Guru Nanak Devji were extremely plesant and cordial.

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1. ਬੂਦ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਰਫੇ ਮਰਦਿ ਖੁਦਾ ॥  
ਰਾਜ਼ਹਾਏ ਮਾਰਫਤ ਰਾ ਰਹਿ ਕੁਸ਼ਾ ॥

Sri Guru Angad Devji, the 1st successor of Sri Guru Nanak Devji, continued to preserve cordial relations with the Muslims. After having been defeated by Sher Shah Suri Hamayun, the successor to Babar, fled towards the Punjab where he waited upon Guruji at Goindwal to get his benediction. When the defeated Emperor arrived at an afternoon, the Guru Sahib at that time, as usual, was watching children at play. The Emperor approached the back of the Guru Sahib who was then absorbed in watching the children play. Thus the Emperor was kept standing for quite a while. In a fit of temper he stretched his hand draw his sword to strike the Guru Sahib. Shriman Bhai Sahib Dr. Vir Singh ji writes :

“The Emperor found it (his sword) struck.”

This restored him to senses. Meantime the Guru Sahib looked thither and the Ocean of Compassion said with a smile : “Let it rest, Emperor ! After sometime when your kingdom will be restored to you, this may find use in protecting your subjects then”.

Hamayun apologized for waving his sword and then instead of receiving rebuffs for his cowardly onslaught on Guru Sahib, he was blessed with a boon of restoration of his kingdom. He felt his knees, kissed Guru Sahib's fingers and sought his pardon. At this the Guru Sahib blessed him again. His glance of



compassion filled the defeated emperor with patience to wait for recovering his throne at the appointed hour. After winning the throne Haymayun promised to be a just ruler.

When Hamayun recovered his empire as blessed by Guru Sahib, he felt grateful to the House of Guru Sahib and desired to make an offering. By that time Sri Guru Angad Devji was no more a temporal figure and in his place Sri Guru Amardas ji reigned. This requires research whether Hymayum did come to visit Sri Guru Amar Dasji or it was Akbar, his son, who by offering 12 villages to Sri Ram Dassji, the Guru Sahib's son-in-law, fulfilled his father's wish.

### **III Sri Guru Amar Dass ji**

Akbar, son of Hamayun, was very liberal and he maintained very friendly relations with the religious leaders of all faiths including the Sikhs.

Akbar, when on a visit to the Punjab, stopped at Goindwal to meet Sri Guru Amar Dassji. On learning that Sri Guru Sahib granted audience only to those who rising above sectarian prejudices were ready to eat at the common kitchen, the emperor alongwith his couriers partook food from the *Langar*-free kitchen and then was received in the audience of Sahib Sri Guru Amar Dass ji. He was so much impressed by the divinity and submity of the Guru Sahib that he offered him the grant of royal Jagirs, but the



Guru Sahib refused the offer as he was avowed not to accumulate any of the material things. Akbar again insisted with the plea that Guruji's daughter was as good as his own and he should be permitted to offer it to his son-in-law, Sri Ram Dass ji. This was conceded. This contribution by Akbar is a historical monument of Sikh-Muslim friendship and co-operation.

Once when [Sri Guru Amar Dass ji was on his way to Hardwar with a large caravan of pilgrims, he was stopped and asked to pay toll which stood at Rs. 1/4/- per head. The Guru Sahib who had a large crowd with him refused to pay it.

The matter was conveyed to Akbar who ordered that all the pilgrims, following Sri Guru Sahib, be allowed to pass without payment.

Further, at Guru Sahib's advice Akbar issued orders prohibiting *Sati* i.e. concremation of widows, which was prevalent among the Hindus from every early times, because the custom was horrible and opposed to all natural feelings.

Thus we find that Akbar's relations with Sri Guru Amar Dass ji were more than cordial and he accepted Sri Guru ji's advice even on matters relating to taxation and social legislations.

Besides Akbar, several other Muslims were also admirers of Sri Guru Amar Dass ji. One Muslim Rajput, Choudhery Muhammab Khan, donated 84 bighas of nehri land and twenty eight rupees every year to Gurdwara *San Sahib*, a historical shrine erected in the memory of Sri Curu Amar Dass ji.

Ala Yar was another admirer and disciple of Sri Guru Amar Dass ji. Thus we find that Sikh-Muslim relations continued to be extremely cordial during the period of Sri Guru Amar Dass ji and the Muslim emperors contributed generously to the lunger-an essential institution of the Sikh church and organisation.

#### **IV Sri Guru Ram Dass ji**

Akbar showed profound respect for Sri Guru Ram Dass ji whom he had met earlier at the court of Sri Guru Amar Dass ji and had made an offering 500 bighas of land for the construction of Amritsar.

Akbar had once encamped in Lahore for about a year with a large army. For obvious reasons the prices had considerably risen and the poor peasantry of the Punjab suffered greatly from the scarcity of grains. When Akbar came to meet the Guru Sahib, the latter asked him to remit the whole land tax for the year. Akbar readily agreed and by waiving all taxes further strengtgened the bond of friendship between the Sikhs and the emperor.



## V Guru Arjan Dev ji

The Sikh-Muslim relations continued to be cordial during the reign of Akbar. When some Qazis complained to the emperor that Sri Arjan Dev ji had criticised Islam in the Adi Granth, he ordered some of the excerpts to be read from this holy book and declared, "It is a book worthy of high esteem."

Hazrat Mian Mir a reputed descendant of the Caliph Omar, a Muslim saint, laid the foundation-stone of *Hari-mandir* (the Golden Temple) at the invitation of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji.

Jahangir, in his early age when he was known as Prince Saleem, was an admirer of the Guru Sahib. He made a grant of 8846 Ghumaon, 7 kanlas and 15 marlas of land in village Kartarpur to Sri Guru Arjan Dayji in the year 1655.

(Mahan Kosh-Bhai Kahan Singh Page 902)

The Sikhs's relations with the Muslim ruler Jahangir, however, deteriorated due to Jahangir's fanaticism and subservience to Qazis and Mullahs who were jealous of Guru Sahib's popularity both with the Hindus and the Muslims. Besides, Diwan Chandu Shah poisoned the emperor's ears against the Guru Sahib with a view to bringing the latter low in public estimation, for he harboured malice against the Guru Sahib, but afterwards when the emperor came to know the true facts, he made amends



with the Guru Sahib (then Sri Hargobind ji). He handed over Chandu, the person responsible for the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji, to Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib for inflicting on him any punishment he liked.<sup>1</sup>

Fifth Guru Sahib (Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji) was extremely popular among the general Muslim public which held him in high esteem.

Nawab Hassan Khan of Lahore was one of the important Muslim disciples of the Guru Sahib. When Guru Sahib expressed his desire to dig a well in Dabi Bazar Lahore, he along with several other Muslims helped Guru ji in this project.

*(Twarikh Guru Kha'sa P-96)*

## VI Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji

Jahangir continued to enhance friendly relations with Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji. When the Governor of Lahore, Hakam Beg, made a false report to the emperor that Guru ji had collected around him dacoits and other bad characters and Guru ji's activities were

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1. ਇਹ ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ਨਿਰਨੈ ਲਹਯੈ ।  
ਸਾਬ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਫਰਜ਼ ਨਾ ਰਹੈ ।  
ਜੋ ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ਵਡੇ ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ।  
ਮਨਾ ਕਾ ਦੋਸ਼ ਉਤਾਰਾ ।

(ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਸੂਰਜ, ਰਾਸ 5, ਅਸ਼ 3)

dangerous for the government as he seemed to be bent upon revolt, he invited Guruji to come for talks by sending his Deputy Minister, Wazir Khan. After his talks with the Guru Sahib, he was convinced of his godliness and he is said to have made a grant of rupees 500/- per day for Guruji.

*(Twarikh Guru Khalsa Page 730)*

The emperor made an offer to the Guru Sahib to bear all the expenses for the completion of the building of Akal Takhat Sahib.

*(Indian National Congress, 1956 Page 43)*

Jahangir allowed Guruji to maintain seven guns, one thousand artillery and 500 cavalry and had appointed Guruji as head of all the government servants in Punjab.

*(Twarikh Guru Khalsa Page 99 urdu)*

When Raja Tara Chand Nalagarhia revolted against the emperor, then Jahangir requested the Guru Sahib for help. Guruji himself led the forces and crushed the revolt.

*(Twarikh Guru Khalsa Page 104 urdu)*

Once when Jahangir visited Amritsar alongwith the Guru Sahib, he offered to defray all the expenses of the completion of the temple, although Guru Sahib did not accept the offer, saying, "The place where the money of

one person is spent becometh that person's property. This temple erected to worship God belongeth to God. All are equal sharers in it.” (Macauliffe)

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib got built mosques at Hargobindpura, Kartarpur and Amritsar.<sup>1</sup> These are monuments of religious tolerance and co-operation.

Sri Guruji had extremely cordial relations with individual Muslims. Some of his personal friends were Sheikh Jan Mohammad Lahori, Muhammed Ismail, Sheikh Karam Shah Kureshi, Mian Mir Pir Kewali, Pir Fazal Irani and Hassan Ali Arbi etc.

*(Thas Sikh Guru Sahiban Page 261)*

Sri Guruji's army included a band of Muslim Pathan mercenaries with Painsa Khan whom Sri Guruji had pampered and fostered since boyhood, at their head.

## **VII Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib**

Sri Guru Har Rai continued the same tradition of friendly relations with the Muslims. Dara, the eldest son of Shahjahan, became a personal friend of the Guru Sahib.

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1. (i) Gurmat Lecture—Page 230

(ii) Khande di Dhar Vich Amrit da Gian by Giani Sher Singh—Page 363.



Once when Dara fell seriously ill, the Guru Sahib sent him a rare medicine which cured him without any delay.

### VIII Sri Guru Harkishan Sahib

Short period coincided with long span of fanatic Aurangzeb who summoned the tender-aged Guru Sahib to the Delhi *Darbar*.

### IX Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji

The Sikhs's relations with the Muslim ruler Aurangzeb deteriorated due to Aurangzeb's fanaticism. Aurangzeb had become unpopular among the Muslims due to the cruel incarceration of his father and cold, blooded murder of his brothers by him. Therefore, to enlist the sympathies of the fanatical section of the Muslims he resolved to carry on a regular *Jehad* against the non-Muslims. He summoned Guru Tegh Bahadur ji to Delhi and persuaded him to accept Islam, but when he failed in his efforts he was so enraged that he ordered Guru Sahib to be put to the sword. However, Aurangzeb became sad and penitent for his cruel act. His mind agitated like leaves moved by the wind. He reflected :

“As Guruji by his death hath fixed a stain on me, so I think that my own life will now be my guest for only a few days.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Macauliffe—Vol IV Page 388

“In his general distress at what had occurred he was not able to take his dinner and retired hungry, The emperor was unable to sleep that night.”<sup>1</sup>

However, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, as every other Sikh Guru Sahib, continued to have friendly relations with individual Muslims. Near Bahadur Garh for in Patiala, a Muslim named Ali Khan paid homage to the Guru Sahib and made him offerings. A shrine stands at this place today. Similarly, Sher Khan of village Hasanpur was also an admirer and devotee of the Guru Sahib.

### **X Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji & Aurangzab**

A brief survey of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji's attitude towards Muhammedans and his relations with Muslims clearly shows that he had most cordial relations with individual Muslims in whom he placed implicit faith.

The day Guru Gobind Singh ji incarnated a Muslim, Saint Bhikhan Shah said his namaz and bowed towards the East which was contrary to Muslim customs. When his disciples asked him the reason, he replied that there had just then incarnated in Patna the greatest prophet who should re-establish faith and destroy the evil. He vowed that he

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1. Macauliffe—Vol IV Page 389

would go to worship the new-incarnate sovereign, and would perform a daily fast till he had seen him. When after repeated entreaties the *faqir* was allowed to see the child, he bowed and placed an offering before the child. He then filled two small vessels, one with milk and the other with water and placed them before the child as a test. If the child spilled the one containing milk it meant that he would side with the Hindus ; if he spilled the one containing water he would be deemed to side with the Muhammadans. The Guru Sahib spontaneously spilled both vessels, which the *faqir* interpreted that the child would not be an adherent to either Hinduism or Islam. He would mire the two into a third one. Bhikhan Shah, Nawab Rahim Baksh and Karim Bakhsh were some of the famous Muslims among Guruji's early admirers. A garden and a village, which were gifted by these two Muslims to the Guru Sahib, are part of the Gurdwara at Patna even upto the Present day.

Pir Araf Din, a Muslim saint, bowed in obeisance to the Guruji in highest esteem.

In 1686, when the Guru Sahib was attacked by the Hindu hill chiefs, the Guru Sahib was helped by Sayyad Budhu Shah, his two brothers, four sons and 700 Muslim disciples. This timely help went a long way to repel the onslaught of the hill chiefs. Two of the Sayyad Budhu



Shah's sons fell in the battle-field, along with many of his disciples. Budhu Shah and his wife Nasiraan became disciples of the Guru Sahib and were glad that they could serve the Guru Sahib. For their openly expressing faith in Guru Sahib the family was later invaded by a Mughal army and brutally done to death. They, including Nasiraan, faced death in a hand to hand tough fight but never thought of apostation. In her last letter, written a few minutes before her death, by Nasiraan to her brother, Saed Khan—a commander of 5,000 in Mughal army—moved the letter so much that in the battle-field he bowed at Guru Sahib's feet and retired to woods for meditation.

When the Guru Sahib was returning to Anandpur after the battle of Bhangani, he was affectionately served by the Pathans of Kotla, near Rupar. Pleased with their devotion, the Guru Sahib blessed them with a sword which is preserved by them as an invaluable Divine Bliss.

While a Hindu Brahmin, Gangoo, greedy of collecting a couple of bags of gold coins, betrayed the presence of the Guru Sahib's two young princes aged 7 and 9 to Mughal cheif of Muranda to be handed over to Wazid Khan, Governor of Sirhind, for execution, it was the Muslim Nawab of Maler Kotla who protested against their execution saying :—

“O viceroy, these children are still drinking milk in the nursery and are too young to commit an offence. They know not good from evil. Wherefore be pleased to allow them to depart.”

But this sane voice was silenced by yet another Hindu courier—Suoha Nand—who said :—“young one of snakes one day become as deadly as snakes.”

Nawab Sher Mohd. Khan of Malerkotla, as a protest against this cruel order of the Governor of Sirhind, left his court in disgust and wrote an historic epistle to Emperor Aurangzeb. To quote English translation of this letter from “*Glimpses of the Divine Masters*” :

“O Mighty king of the world, who on account of justice has placed thy throne on the azure vault, may the dappled horse of the skies be ever under thy control, because thou hast eclipsed the brilliance of the Sun and the Moon by the splendour of innumerable victories.

The humble and devoted petitioner, with all respects due to the grandeur of the shadow of God and the might of the saviour of the world, most respectfully begs to lay his humble appeal before your Most Gracious Majesty and hopes from your Imperial Majesty's unfathomable kindness and unlimited magnanimity that the august person of the shadow of God, viceregent of that holy Prophet (peace be on him) in this world, the incarnation of God's mercy over his



creatures by sheer munificence, be pleased to bestow his compassion and forgiveness on the young sons of Gobind Singh, Tenth Guru of the Sikh nation.

The viceroy of Sirhind Province with a view to avenge the disobedience and disloyal activities of the Guru which may have been committed by him, has, without any fault or crime of the guiltless and innocent children, simply on the basis of their being sons of Gobind Singh, condemned those minor sons liable to execution and has proposed to wall them up alive till they die.

Although no one dares raise an objection against the order of the viceroy, whose order is as inevitable a death, yet the faithful servant and well wisher of thy august Majesty's Empire deems it most advisable to humbly appeal and to bring this to your Majesty's benign notice.

May it be said that in view of certain important political considerations Your Majesty is disposed to inflict suitable punishment on the Sikh nation for their undesirable activities in the past. It would be quite compatible with justice, but your Majesty's humble and devoted servant thinks, it would be no way consistent with the principles of sovereignty and supreme power, to wreak vengeance of the misdeeds of a whole nation on two innocent children, who on account of



of their tender age are quite innocent and unable to take a stand against the all-powerful viceroy.

This sort of action obviously appears to be absolutely against the dictates of Islam and the laws propounded by the founder of Islam (may God's blessings be showered on him) and Your Majesty's humble servant is afraid that the enactment of such an atrocious act would perpetually remain an ugly blot on the face of Your Majesty's renowned justice and righteousness. It may graciously be considered that the mode of inflicting punishment and tortures as contemplated by the Viceroy of Sirhind can by no means be considered compatible with the principles of *Supreme Rule, Equity and Justice*.

In view of the above considerations Your Majesty's humble and devoted servant most respectfully takes the liberty of suggesting that if Your Majesty considers it expedient that the sons of Guru Gobind Singh may be kept under restraint from indulging in disloyal activities, it would be more appropriate if they could be interned in the Royal Capital Delhi, till they are duly reformed so as willingly to acknowledge allegiance and loyalty to the throne.

As an alternative both the boys may be placed under my care so as to keep a check on their actions and movements and not to allow them to entertain any kind of ideas of sedition or disloyalty in their minds. Although the humble petitioner fears that the humble appeal which is prompted

exclusively by the sense of veracity and loyalty to the throne may be deemed as transgressing the limits of propriety, yet the *fear of God* and *urge of truth* does not allow undue suppression of truth.

If this humble appeal has the honour of meeting the Royal acceptance, it shall be most fortunate. If, however, it is unfortunately deprived of the honour of acceptance, still Your Majesty's humble and devoted servant shall have the consolation of having performed the sacred duty of expressing what was right and just and having allowed his pen not to deviate in the expression of truth."

When Guru Gobind Singh came to know of it, he prophesied that "after the roots of the oppressive Turks were all dug up, the roots of the Nawab should still remain". It is due to a sense of gratitude and loyalty to their Guru that the Sikhs have never molested Malerkotla even when the whole surrounding country was devastated. Even during terrible communal riots attending the partition of India in 1947, the Muslim population in the city of Malerkotla was not molested. To quote Rev. W.D. Barr from *The Sikhs And Their Scriptures* :

"Muslims *en route* to Malerkotla *via* train were attacked but when the Sikhs knew they were going to Malerkotla they spread them and personally escorted them to Malerkotla. Many Muslims, fleeing for their lives, were being pursued by Sikhs trying to kill them, but when they crossed into the



border of Malerkotla State they stopped and granted them their lives. There is no question in the Nawab's mind...that the Muslims were spared in Malerkotla State directly because of Gobind Singh's declaration that the Muslims of that State were to be protected."

When the Guru Sahib was in the jungle of *Machhiwara* and Mughal army was searching for him, two Pathans, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, helped the Guru Sahib to escape. The Guru Sahib and three Sikhs donned the blue garments of Muslim faqirs. Disguised in the way, the Guru Sahib was borne in a litter by the two pathans and to of the Guru Sahib's companions.

When questioned by the Mughal soldiers, the men said employing puns in their expression that they were carrying their *Uch Ka Piran Pir*—the spiritual leader of pirs of *Uch*. At another place the party was again stopped by the Mughal detachment whose suspicions were roused. Not satisfied with reply of the bearers, the Muslim officer called for Pir Mohammad, a great Muslim theologian to identify the pir. He, on recognising the Guru Sahib, told the officer ;

"You have committed a sin by stopping and suspecting this pir and causing him inconvenience. He, in fact, is the pir of the pirs of *Uch*".

Thereupon, the officer asked the Guru Sahib forgiveness and allowed him to go.



Sometime after this Guru Sahib received asylum with an influential Muslim, Rai Kalla, who was the chaudri of Jagraon and Rai Kot. He was one of the Guru Sahib's Muslim admirers.

When the Guru Sahib was in *Lakhi Jungle* in search of a safe retreat, having been hotly pursued by the Mughal forces, a Muslim faqir, Ibrahim, who had a large following, met the Guru Sahib and became his follower. He was blessed with Amrita and renamed Ajmer Singh.

### **Bahadur Shah & Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji**

Bahadur Shah developed friendly contacts with the Guru Sahib, when he visited Punjab to collect the tribute in arrears from some of the petty rulers. Bhai Nand Lal, who was Prince's Secretary, explained the Guru Sahib's noble mission to the prince. The prince befriended the Guruji and sent him appropriate presents through Nand Lal.

After Aurangzeb's death, Bahadur Shah sought Guru Sahib's blessing with which he vanquished his brother and became the ruler. Bahadur Shah then met Guru Sahib reverentially and requested him to accompany him to the South. Guru Sahib agreed to this and for over a year they were journeying together to the South.

The last words of Sri Guru Sahib, to the Khalsa, according to Bhai Chaupa Singh were that :

“It is a part of the mission of the Khalsa to bridge the gulf that separates the Hindus and the Muslims.”

Guru Sahib had propagated it in his life-time by preaching :

“*Karta* (the Creator) and *Karim* (the Beneficent) are the same

*Razak* (the Provider) and *Rahim* (the Merciful) are the same ;

Let no man even by mistake suppose there is a difference

The temple and the mosque are the same ;

The Hindu worship and the Muslim prayer are the same;

It is through error that they appear different.

All men have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, the same build,

Allah and Abhekh are the same ;

The Purans and the Quran are the same

They are all alike.

It is one God who created all”,<sup>1</sup>

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1. ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ  
ਦੂਸਰੋ ਨਾ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥  
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ ।  
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੁਪ ਸਭੇ ਏਕ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ ॥

## II. Maharaja Ranjit Singh

When Sikh empire was established by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Muslims continued to enjoy a pride place and patronage of the Maharaja Sahib.

Fakir Azizudin, a Muslim, was not only his (Maharaja's) personal physician but also his foreign minister. The Maharaja trusted him so much that he never undertook any serious operations without consulting him. In all matters connected with the Europeans and the English Government, Azizudin was specially employed and his counsels sought. It may be attributed that throughout his long reign the Maharaja maintained such close relations with the Fakir that he used to set out on distant expeditions, leaving only the Fakir with a few orderlies for the defence of Lahore.

Two other prominent Muhammedans at the court of Maharaja were Nawab Sarfraz Khan of Multan and his younger brother Zu-l-fakar Khan, sons of the stout old Chief Muzaffar Khan.

Another of the conquered Muhammedan Chiefs who figured in the Maharaja's train at Lahore was Khuda Yar Khan, the Tiwana Chief, who with his cousins, was brought to Lahore in command of fifty Tiwana horses. Fakir Syed Mughis-ud-Din, the present head of the Fakir family in Pakistan, even today testifies emphatically that :



“The Great Sikh ruler had no communal prejudices and there was no question of discrimination against the Muslims in his domain.”

Fort Gobindgarh, after being rebuilt by the Maharaja, was manned by two thousand men and twenty five guns under a Muslim officer which shows that Maharaja trusted the Muslims even in the matters relating to the defence of the country.

## **XII Patiala State**

Even under the British rule, Sikh-Muslim relations continued to be cordial. The Prime Minister and the Inspector-General of Police in the erstwhile Patiala State were once Muslims and several other posts of importance were also held by persons from that community. In other Sikhs States too they occupied a pride place.

## **PARTITION**

“If at the time of partition the Sikh-Muslim relations deteriorated to the worst, it was because, “Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, neither of them well acquainted with Sikh affairs, had not fully applied their minds to the Sikh problem.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Pakistan—old Country New Nation by Ian Stephens Page 171

However, afterwards the relations between the two communities have improved considerably.

When on the occasion of cricket match between India and Pakistan, free access to Lahore was permitted to the Indian public to develop goodwill between the two countries. The Muslims of Lahore gave warmest reception to the Indian Sikhs who went there to see the match.

In the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bengal in 1950 the Sikhs of Calcutta then repeatedly went out of the way to help out-numbered Muslims who were victims of Hindu mob-violence, risking their lives and treasured motor vehicles in doing so.

Setting up of a Sikh-Muslim in Lahore and publication of literature concerning Sikhs<sup>1</sup> by the Pakistan Government is symbolic of increasing Sikh-Muslim friendship. Let memories of the former bitter strifes not prevent the improving of relations. Let us remember that only nine years after the second of the world wars of devastating ferocity fought within a generation, Britain and Germany became allies within NATO.

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1. (i) Sikh Shrines in Pakistan

(ii) Recollections of Princess Bamba

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## INDEX

<b>Architecture</b>	76	<b>Golden Temple</b>	
<b>Adultery</b>	93	Statue of	50
<b>Christianity</b>		<b>Honesty</b>	116
Essence of	60	<b>Inspiration</b>	
<b>Charity</b>	III	kinds of	27
<b>Divine will</b>		<b>Islam</b>	
Ascertaining of	63	meaning of	55
<b>Dancing</b>	85	<b>Karma</b>	
<b>Democracy</b>	105	meaning of	55
<b>Fasting</b>		<b>Life</b>	
Sikh view of	52	goal of	58, 62
<b>Food</b>		<b>Prayer</b>	
meat	89	Contents of	43
wine	90	importance of	38
<b>God</b>		postures for	43
names of	11	time for	39
concept of	11	<b>Pilgrimage</b>	
attributes of	13	purpose of	45
<b>Guru</b>		<b>Painting</b>	79
Sikh concept of	14	<b>Quran</b>	
characteristics of	104	authorship of	30
whether incarnate	99, 104	<b>Religion</b>	
<b>Gospels</b>		capacity of	9
authenticity of	23	function of	7
<b>Gita</b>		meaning of	7
interpolations in	29	relation with Science	101
		what is true ?	83











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